

*The*  
A.E.F.



HEYWOOD BROUN





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**THE A. E. F.**







GENERAL PERSHING  
COMMANDING THE A. E. F.

# THE A. E. F. WITH GENERAL PERSHING AND THE AMERICAN FORCES

BY  
**HEYWOOD BROUN**



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TO  
RUTH HALE



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# THE A. E. F.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BIG POND

“VOILÀ UN SOUSMARIN,” said a sailor, as he stuck his head through the doorway of the smoking room. The man with aces and eights dropped, but the player across the table had three sevens, and he waited for a translation. It came from the little gun on the afterdeck. The gun said “Bang!” and in a few seconds it repeated “Bang!” I heard the second shot from my stateroom, but before I had adjusted my lifebelt the gun fired at the submarine once more.

A cheer followed this shot. No Yale eleven, or even Harvard for that matter, ever heard such a cheer. It was as if the shout for the first touchdown and for the last one and for all the field goals and long gains had been

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thrown into one. There was something in the cheer, too, of a long drawn “ho-old ‘em.”

I looked out the porthole and asked an ambulance man: “Did we get her then?”

“No, but we almost did,” he answered. “There she is,” he added. “That’s the periscope.”

Following the direction of his finger I found a stray beanpole thrust somewhat carelessly into the ocean. It came out of a wave top with a rakish tilt. Probably ours was the angle, for the steamer was cutting the ocean into jigsaw sections as we careened away for dear life, now with a zig and then with a zag, seeking safety in drunken flight. When I reached the deck, steamer and passengers seemed to be doing as well as could be expected, and even better.

The periscope was falling astern, and the three hundred passengers, mostly ambulance drivers and Red Cross nurses, were lined along the rail, rooting. Some of the girls stood on top of the rail and others climbed up to the lifeboats, which were as good as a row of boxes. It was distinctly a home team crowd.

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Nobody cheered for the submarine. The only passenger who showed fright was a chap who rushed up and down the deck loudly shouting: "Don't get excited."

"Give 'em hell," said a home town fan and shook his fist in the direction of the submarine. The gunner fired his fourth shot and this time he was far short in his calculation.

"It's a question of whether we get her first or she gets us, isn't it?" asked an old lady in about the tone she would have used in asking a popular lecturer whether or not he thought Hamlet was really mad. Such neutrality was beyond me. I couldn't help expressing a fervent hope that the contest would be won by our steamer. It was the bulliest sort of a game, and a pleasant afternoon, too, but one passenger was no more than mildly interested. W. K. Vanderbilt did not put on a life preserver nor did he leave his deck chair. He sat up just a bit and watched the whole affair tolerantly. After all the submarine captain was a stranger to him.

Our fifth and final shot was the best. It hit the periscope or thereabouts. The shell did not

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rebound and there was a patch of oil on the surface of the water. The beanpole disappeared. The captain left the bridge and went to the smoking room. He called for cognac.

“Il est mort,” said he, with a sweep of his right hand.

“He says we sunk her,” explained the man who spoke French.

The captain said the submarine had fired one torpedo and had missed the steamer by about ninety feet. The U-boat captain must have taken his eye off the boat, or sliced or committed some technical blunder or other, for he missed an easy shot. Even German efficiency cannot eradicate the blessed amateur. May his thumbs never grow less!

We looked at the chart and found that our ship was more than seven hundred miles from the nearest land. It seemed a lonely ocean.

One man came through the crisis with complete triumph. As soon as the submarine was sighted, the smoking room steward locked the cigar chest and the wine closet. Not until then did he go below for his lifebelt.

Reviewing my own emotions, I found that I

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had not been frightened quite as badly as I expected. The submarine didn't begin to scare me as much as the first act of "The Thirteenth Chair," but still I could hardly lay claim to calm, for I had not spoken one of the appropriate speeches which came to my mind after the attack. The only thing to which I could point with pride was the fact that before putting on my lifebelt I paused to open a box of candy, and went on deck to face destruction, or what not, with a caramel between my teeth. But before the hour was up I was sunk indeed.

It was submarine this and sousmarin that in the smoking room. The U-boats lurked in every corner. One man had seen two and at the next table was a chap who had seen three. There was the fellow who had sighted the periscope first of all, the man who had seen the wake of the torpedo, and the littlest ambulance driver who had sighted the submarine through the bathroom window while immersed in the tub. He was the man who had started for the deck with nothing more about him than a lifebelt and had been turned back.

"I wonder," said a passenger, "whether those submarines have wireless? Do you suppose now that boat could send messages on ahead and ask other U-boats to look after us?" And just then the gun on the forward deck went "Bang."

It was the meanest and most inappropriate sound I ever heard. It was an anti-climax of the most vicious sort. It was bad form, bad art, bad everything. I felt a little sick, and one of the contributing emotions was a sort of fearfully poignant boredom. I tried to remember just what the law of averages was and to compute as rapidly as possible the chances of the vessel to complete two more days of travel if attacked by a submarine every hour.

"The ocean is full of the damn things," said the man at the next table petulantly.

This time the thing was a black object not more than fifty yards away. The captain signaled the gunner not to fire again and he let it be known that this was nothing but a barrel. Later it was rumored that it was a mine, but then there were all sorts of rumors during those last two days when we ran along

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with lifeboats swung out. There was much talk of a convoy, but none appeared.

Many passengers slept on deck and some went to meals with their lifebelts on. Everybody jumped when a plate was dropped and there was always the possibility of starting a panic by slamming a door. And so we cheered when the steamer came to the mouth of the river which leads to Bordeaux. We cheered for France from friendship. We cheered from surprise and joy when the American flag went up to the top of a high mast and we cheered a little from sheer relief because we had left the sea and the U-boats behind us.

They had been with us not a little from the beginning. Even on the first day out from New York the ship ran with all lights out and portholes shielded. Later passengers were forbidden to smoke on deck at night and once there was a lifeboat drill of a sort, but the boats were not swung out in the davits until after we met the submarine.

Early in the voyage an old lady complained to the purser because a young man in the music

room insisted on playing the Dead March from "Saul." There was more cheerful music. The ambulance drivers saw to that. We had an Amherst unit and one from Leland Stanford and the boys were nineteen or thereabouts. It is well enough to say that all the romance has gone out of modern war, but you can't convince a nineteen-year-older of that when he has his first khaki on his back and his first anti-typhoid inoculation in his arm. They boasted of these billion germs and they swaggered and played banjos and sang songs. Mostly they sang at night on the pitch black upper deck. The littlest ambulance driver had a nice tenor voice and on still nights he did not care what submarine commander knew that he "learned about women from her." He and his companions rocked the stars with "She knifed me one night." Daytimes they studied French from the ground up. It was the second day out that I heard a voice from just outside my porthole inquire "E-S-T—what's that and how do you say it?" Later on the littlest ambulance driver had made marked progress and

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was explaining “Mon oncle a une bonne fille, mais mon père est riche.”

Romance was not hard to find on the vessel. The slow waiter who limped had been wounded at the Marne, and the little fat stewardess had spent twenty-two days aboard the German raider *Eitel Friedrich*. There were French soldiers in the steerage and one of them had the Croix de Guerre with four palms. He had been wounded three times.

But when the ship came up the river the littlest ambulance driver—the one who knew “est” and women—summed things up and decided that he was glad to be an American. He looked around the deck at the Red Cross nurses and others who had stood along the rail and cheered in the submarine fight, and he said:

“I never would have thought it of ‘em. It’s kinda nice to know American women have got so much nerve.”

The littlest ambulance driver drew himself up to his full five feet four and brushed his new uniform once again.

“Yes, sir,” he said, “we men have certainly

got to hand it to the girls on this boat." And as he went down the gangplank he was humming: "And I learned about women from her."

## CHAPTER II

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THE dawn was gray and so was the ship, but the eye picked her out of the mist because of two broad yellow stripes which ran the whole length of the upper decks. As the ship warped into the pier the stripes of yellow became so many layers of men in khaki, each motionless and each gazing toward the land.

“Say,” cried a voice across the diminishing strip of water, “what place is this anyhow?” The reply came back from newspapermen whose only companions on the pier were two French soldiers and a little group of German prisoners.

“Well,” said the voice from the ship, “this ought to be better than the Texas border.”

The American regulars had come to France.

The two French soldiers looked at the men

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on the transport and cheered, flinging their caps in the air. The Germans just looked. They were engaged in moving rails and after lifting one they would pause and gaze into space for many minutes until the guards told them to get to work again. But now the guards were so interested that the Germans prolonged the rest interval and stared at the ship. News that ships were in was carried through the town and people came running to the pier. There were women and children and old men and a few soldiers.

Nobody had known the Americans were coming. Even the mayor was surprised and had to run home to get his red sash and his high hat. Children on the way to school did not go further than the quay, for back of the ship, creeping into the slip, were other ships with troops and torpedo boat destroyers and a cruiser.

Just before the gangplank was lowered the band on the first transport played "The Star Spangled Banner." The men on the ship stood at attention. The crowds on shore only watched. They did not know our national

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anthem yet. Next the band played "The Marseillaise," and the hats of the crowd came off. As the last note died away one of the Americans relaxed from attention and leaned over the rail toward a small group of newspapermen from America.

"Do they allow enlisted men to drink in the saloons in this town?" he asked.

Somebody else wanted to know, "Is there any place in town where a fellow can get a piece of pie?" A sailor was anxious to rent a bicycle or a horse and "ride somewhere." Later the universal question became, "Don't any of these people speak American?"

The men were hustled off the ship and marched into the long street which runs parallel with the docks. They passed within a few feet of the Germans. There was less than the length of a bayonet between them but the doughboys did credit to their brief training. They kept their eyes straight ahead.

"How do they look?" one of the newspapermen asked a German sergeant in the group of prisoners.

"Oh, they look all right," he said profes-

sionally, "but you can't tell yet. I'd want to see them in action first."

"They don't lift their knees high enough," he added and grinned at his little joke.

A French soldier came up then and expostulated. He said that we must not talk to the Germans and set his prisoners back to their task of lifting rails. There were guards at both ends of the street, but scores of children slipped by them and began to talk to the soldiers. There were hardly half a dozen men in the first regiment who understood French. Veterans of the Mexican border tried a little bad Spanish and when that didn't work they fell back to signs. The French made an effort to meet the visitors half way. I saw a boy extend his reader to a soldier and explain that a fearfully homely picture which looked like a caterpillar was a "chenille." The boy added that the chenille was so ugly that it was without doubt German and no good. Children also pointed out familiar objects in the book such as "Chats" and "Chiens," but as one soldier said: "I don't care about those

things, sonny: haven't you got a roast chicken or an apple pie in that book?"

Some officers had tried to teach their men a little French on the trip across, but not much seemed to stick. The men were not over curious as to this strange language. One old sergeant went to his lieutenant and said: "You know, sir, I've served in China and the Philippines and Cuba. I've been up against this foreign language proposition before and I know just what I need. If you'll write down a few words for me and tell me how they're pronounced I won't have to bother you any more. I want 'Give me a plate of ham and eggs. How much? What's your name?' and 'Do you love me, kid?'"

The vocabulary of the officers did not seem very much more extensive than that of the men. While the troops were disembarking officers were striving to get supplies started for the camp several miles outside the city. All the American motor trucks had been shipped on the slowest steamer of the convoy but the French came to our aid. "I have just one order," said the French officer, who met

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the first unit of the American Expeditionary Army, "there is no American and no French now. There is only ours."

Although the officer was kind enough to make ownership of all available motor trucks common, he could not do as much for the language of the poilus who drove them. I found the American motor truck chief hopelessly entangled.

"Have you enough gasoline to go to the camp and back?" he inquired of the driver of the first camion to be loaded. The Frenchman shrugged his shoulders to indicate that he did not comprehend. The officer smiled tolerantly and spoke with gentle firmness as if to a wayward child. "Have you enough gasoline?" he said. Again the Frenchman's shoulders went up. "Have you enough gasoline?" repeated the officer, only this time he spoke loudly and fiercely as if talking to his wife. Even yet the Frenchman did not understand. Inspiration came to the American officer. Suddenly he gesticulated with both hands and began to imitate George Beban as the French waiter in one of the old Weber

and Fields shows. “ ‘Ave you enough of ze gaz-o-leene?’” he piped mincingly. Then an interpreter came.

After several companies had disembarked the march to camp began, up the main street and along the fine shore road which skirts the bay. The band struck up “Stars and Stripes Forever” and away they went. They did not march well, these half green companies who had rolled about the seas so long, but they held the eyes of all and the hearts of some. They glorified even cheap tunes such as “If You Don’t Like Your Uncle Sammy Go Back to Your Home Across the Sea,” and Sousa seemed a very master of fire when the men paraded to his marches. These American units did not give the impression of compactness which one gets from Frenchmen on the march. The longer stride gives the doughboy an uneven gait. He looks like a man walking across a plowed field and yet you cannot miss a sense of power. You feel that he will get there even if his goal is the red sun itself at the back of the hills.

There was no long drawn cheer from the

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people who lined the streets to see the Americans pass. Even crowds in Paris do not cheer like that. Instead individuals called out phrases of greeting and there was much hand-clapping. Although mixed in point of service the men ran to type as far as build went. They amazed the French by their height, although some of the organizations which followed the first division are better physically. Of course these American troops are actually taller than the French and in addition they are thin enough to accentuate their height. It was easy to pick out the youngsters, most of whom found their packs a little heavy. They would stand up straighter though when an old sergeant moved alongside and growled a word or two. It was easy to see that these sergeants were of the old army. They were all lank men, boiled red from within and without. They had put deserts and jungles under foot and no distance would seem impossible for them along the good roads of France.

As ship after ship came in more troops marched to camp. The streets were filled with the clatter of the big boots of doughboys

throughout the morning and well into the afternoon. There were American army mules, too, and although the natives had seen the animal before in French service, he attracted no end of attention. In his own particular army the mule seems more picturesque. He has never learned French. It seems to break his spirit, but he pranced and kicked and played the very devil under the stimulus of the loud endearments of the American mule drivers.

The French were also interested in a company of American negroes specially recruited for stevedore service. The negroes had been outfitted with old cavalry overcoats of a period shortly after the Civil War. They were blue coats with gold buttons and the lining was a tasteful but hardly somber shade of crimson. Nor were the negroes without picturesque qualities even when they had shed their coats and gone to work. Their working shirts of white were inked all over with pious sentences calculated to last through the submarine zone, but piety was mixed. One big negro, for instance, had written upon

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his shirt: "The Lord is my shepherd," but underneath he had drawn a large starfish for luck. A few daring ones had ornamented themselves with skulls and crossbones. To the negroes fell the bitterest disappointment of the American landing in France. Two Savannah stevedores caught sight of a black soldier in the French uniform and rushed up to exchange greetings. The Senegalese shrugged his shoulders and turned away from the flood of English.

"That," said one of the American darkies, "is the most ignorantest and stuck up nigger I ever did see." They were not yet ready to believe that the negro race had let itself in for the amazing complications of a foreign language.

Later in the day the town was full of the eddies which occur when two languages meet head on, for almost all the soldiers and sailors received leave to come to town. They wanted beer and champagne and cognac, chocolate, cake, crackers, pears, apples, cherries, picture postcards, sardines, rings, cigarettes, and books of French and English phrases. The

phrase books were usually an afterthought, so commerce was conducted with difficulty. A few of the shopkeepers equipped themselves with dictionaries and painstakingly worked out the proper reply for each customer. Signs were much more effective and when it came to purchase, the sailor or soldier simply held out a handful of American money and the storekeeper took a little. To the credit of the shopkeepers of the nameless port, let it be said that they seemed in every case to take no more than an approximation of the right amount. Fortunately the late unpleasantness at Babel was not absolutely thoroughgoing and there are words in French which offer no great difficulty to the American. The entente cordiale is furthered by words such as "chocolat," "sandwich," "biere" and "bifstek." The difficulties of "vin" are not insurmountable either.

"A funny people," was the comment of one doughboy, "when I ask for 'sardines' I get 'em all right, but when I say 'cheese' or 'canned peaches' I don't get anything."

Another complained, "I don't understand

these people at all. They spell some of their words all right, but they haven't got the sense to say 'em that way." He could see no reason why "vin" should sound like "van."

Another objection of the invading army was that the townsfolk demanded whole sentences of French. Mixtures seemed incomprehensible to them and the officer who kept crying out, "Madame, where are my œufs?" got no satisfaction whatever.

Late in the afternoon phrase books began to appear, but they did not help a great deal because by the time the right phrase had been found some fellow who used only sign language had slipped in ahead of the student. Then, too, some of the books seemed hardly adapted for present conditions. One officer was distinctly annoyed because the first sentence he found in a chapter headed war terms was, "Where is the grand stand?" But the book which seemed to fall furthest short of promise was a pamphlet entitled, "Just the French You Want to Know."

"Look at this," said an indignant owner. "Le travail assure la santé et la bien-être, il

élève et fortifie l'âme, il adoucit les souffrances, chasse l'ennui, et plaisir sans pareil, il est encore le sel des autres plaisirs. Go on with it. Look at what all that means—‘Work assures health and well being, it elevates and fortifies the soul, drives away ennui, alleviates suffering, and, a pleasure without an equal, it is still the salt of all other pleasures’—what do you think of that? Just the French you want to know! I don’t want to address the graduating class, I want to tell a barber to leave it long on top, but trim it pretty close around the edges.”

The happy purchaser of the book did not throw it away, however, until he turned to the chapter headed “At the Tailor’s” and found that the first sentence set down in French meant, “The bodice is too tight in front, and it is uncomfortable under the arms. It is a little too low-necked, and the sleeves are not wide enough.”

Sundown sent most of the soldiers scurrying back to camp, but the port lacked no life that night, for sailors came ashore in increasing numbers and American officers were

everywhere. The two hotels—the Grand and the Grand Hotel des Messageries, known to the army as the Grand and Miserable Hotel—were thronged. Generals and Admirals rushed about to conferences and in the middle of all the confusion a young second lieutenant sat at the piano in the parlor of the Grand and played Schumann's "Warum" over and over again as if his heart would break for homesickness. The sailors and a few soldiers who seemed to have business in the town had no trouble in making themselves at home.

"Mademoiselle, donnez moi un baiser, s'il vous plait," said one of the apt pupils to the pretty barmaid at the Café du Centre.

But she said: "Mais non."

Crowds began to collect just off the main street. I hurried over to one group of sailors, convinced that something important was going on, since French soldiers and civilians stood about six deep. History was being made indeed. For the first time "craps" was being played on French soil.

## CHAPTER III

### LAFAYETTE, NOUS VOILÀ

THE navy was the first to take Paris. While the doughboys were still at the port crowding themselves into camp, lucky sailors were on their way to let the French capital see the American uniform. I came up on the night train with a crowd of them. Their pockets bulged with money, tins of salmon, ham and truffled chicken. They had chocolate in their hats and boxes of fancy crackers under their arms, while cigars and cigarettes poked out of their blouses. They would have nothing to do with French tobacco, but favored a popular American brand which sells for a quarter in New York and twice as much over here. One almost expected each sailor to produce a roast turkey or a pheasant from up his sleeve at meal time, but it was pretty much all meal time for these men who were making their

shore leave an intensive affair. One was a very new sailor and he was rejoicing to find land under his feet again.

“Oh, boy!” he said, when I asked him about his ship, “that old tub had two more movements than a hula dancer.”

The little group in my compartment was sampling some champagne which hospitable folk at the port had given them. It was not real champagne, to be sure, but a cheaper white wine with twice as many bubbles and at least as much noise. It sufficed very well, since it was ostentation rather than thirst which spurred the sailors on and they spread their hospitality throughout the train. A few French soldiers headed back for the trenches were the traveling companions of the Americans. The poilus were decidedly friendly but somewhat amazed at the big men who made so much noise with their jokes and their songs. Of course the French were called upon to sample the various tinned and bottled goods which the sailors were carrying. It was “have a swig of this, Froggy” or “get yourself around that, Frenchy.” The Americans were

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still just a bit condescending to their brothers in arms. They had not yet seen them in action. Of course there was much comparison of equipment and the sailors all tried on the trench helmets of the French and found them too small. The entente grew and presently there was an allied concert. The sailors sang, "What a Wonderful Mother You'd Make," and the French replied with the Verdun song, "Ils Ne Passeront Pas," and later with "Madelon."

I heard that song many times afterwards and it always brings to mind a picture of dusty French soldiers marching with their short, quick, eager stride. They are always dusty. All summer long they wear big over-coats which come below the knee. Dust settles and multiplies and if you see a French regiment marching in the spring rainy season, it will still be dusty. Perhaps their souls are a little dusty now, but it is French dust. And as they march they sing as the men sang to the newly arrived Americans in the train that night:

For all the soldiers, on their holidays,  
 There is a place, just tucked in by the woods,  
 A house with ivy growing on the walls—  
 A cabaret—“Aux Toulourous”—the goods!  
 The girl who serves is young and sweet as love,  
 She’s light as any butterfly in Spring,  
 Her eyes have got a sparkle like her wine.  
 We call her Madelon—it’s got a swing!  
 The soldiers’ girl! She leads us all a dance!  
 She’s only Madelon, but she’s Romance!

When Madelon comes out to serve us drinks,  
 We always know she’s coming by her song!  
 And every man, he tells his little tale,  
 And Madelon, she listens all day long.  
 Our Madelon is never too severe—  
 A kiss or two is nothing much to her—  
 She laughs us up to love and life and God—  
 Madelon! Madelon! Madelon!

We all have girls for keeps that wait at home  
 Who’ll marry us when fighting time is done;  
 But they are far away—too far to tell  
 What happens in these days of cut-and-run.  
 We sigh away such days as best we can,  
 And pray for time to bring us nearer home,  
 But tales like ours won’t wait till then to tell—  
 We have to run and boast to Madelon.  
 We steal a kiss—she takes it all in play;  
 We dream she is that other—far away.

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A corp'ral with a feather in his cap  
Went courting Madelon one summer's day,  
And, mad with love, he swore she was superb,  
And he would wed her any day she'd say.  
But Madelon was not for any such—  
She danced away and laughed: “My stars above!  
Why, how could I consent to marry you,  
When I have my whole regiment to love?  
I could not choose just one and leave the rest.  
I am the soldiers' girl—I like that best!”

When Madelon comes out to serve us drinks,  
We always know she's coming by her song!  
And every man, he tells his little tale,  
And Madelon, she listens all day long.  
Our Madelon is never too severe—  
A kiss or two is nothing much to her—  
She laughs us up to love and life and God—  
Madelon! Madelon! Madelon!

When the train came into Paris early the next morning the sailors were singing the chorus with the poilus. They parted company at the quai d'Orsay. The soldiers went to the front; the sailors turned to Paris. It was a Paris such as no one had ever seen before. The “bannière étoilée” was everywhere. We call it the Stars and Stripes. Little flags were stuck rakishly behind the ears of disreputable

Parisian cab horses; bigger flags were in the windows of the shops and on top of buildings, but the biggest American flag of all hung on the Strassburg monument which shed its mourning when the war began.

Two days later all the flags were fluttering, for on the morning of the third of July the doughboys came to Paris. It made no difference that they were only a battalion. When the French saw them they thought of armies and of new armies, for these were the first soldiers in many months who smiled as they marched. The train was late, but the crowd waited outside the Gare d'Austerlitz for more than two hours. French Red Cross nurses were waiting at the station, and the doughboys had their first experience with French rations, for they began the long day with "petit déjeuner." Men brought up on ham and eggs and flapjacks and oatmeal and even breakfast pie, found war bread and coffee a scant repast, but the ration proved more popular than was expected when it was found that the coffee was charged with cognac. It was a stronger stimulant, though, which

sent the men up on the tips of their toes as they swung down the street covering thirty-two inches with each stride. For the first time they heard the roar of a crowd. It was not the steady roar such as comes from American throats. It was split up into "Vive les Etats Unis!" and "Vive l'Amérique!" with an occasional "Vive le President Wilson!" This appearance was only a dress rehearsal and the troops were hurried through little frequented streets to a barracks to await the morning of the Fourth.

Paris began the great day by waking Pershing with music. The band of the republican guard was at the gate of his house a little after eight o'clock. The rest of Paris seemed to have had no trouble in arousing itself without music, for already several hundred thousand persons were crowded about the General's hotel. First there were trumpets; then brasses blared and drums rumbled. The General proved himself a light sleeper and a quick dresser. Before the last note of the fanfare died away he was at the window and bowing to the crowd. This time there was a solid

roar, for everybody shouted “Vive Pershing.” The band cut through the din. There were a few strange variations and uncertainties in the tune, but it was unmistakably “The Star Spangled Banner.” Only a handful in the crowd knew the American National anthem, but they shouted “Chapeau, chapeau” so hard that everybody took up the cry and took off his hat. There was a fine indefinite noisy roar which would have done credit to a double header crowd at the Polo Grounds when Pershing left his hotel for the “Invalides,” where the march of the Americans was to begin. It was pleasant to observe at that moment that our commander has as straight a back as any man in the allied armies can boast.

At least four hundred thousand people were crowded around the “Invalides.” They had plenty of chance to shout. They were able to keep their enthusiasm within bounds when first Poincaré appeared and then Painlevé. The next celebrity was Papa Joffre and hats went into the air. There was an interval of waiting then and a bit of a riot. An old man

who found the elbows of his neighbors disagreeable, exclaimed: "Oh, let me have peace!" Somebody who heard the word "peace" shouted: "He's a pacifist," and people near at hand began to hit at him. He was saved by the coming of the American soldiers. "Vive les Teddies," shouted the crowd and forgot the old man.

The crowd made way for the Americans as they marched toward the "Invalides" and into the court yard where the trophies won from the Germans are displayed. "You will bring more from the Boche," shouted a Frenchman. French and American flags floated above the guns and aeroplanes and minenwerfers. During the short ceremony the American soldiers looked about curiously at the trophies and up at the dome above the tomb of Napoleon. Many knew him by reputation and some had heard that he was buried there.

After a short ceremony the Americans marched out of the "Invalides" and toward the Picpus cemetery. The crowds had increased. It was hard marching now. French children ran in between the legs of the sol-

diers. French soldiers and civilians crowded in upon them. It was impossible to keep ranks. Now the men in khaki were just a little brown stream twisting and turning in an effort to get onward. People threw roses at the soldiers and they stuffed them into their hats and in the gun barrels. It was reported from several sources that one or two soldiers who were forced out of ranks were kissed, but no one would admit it afterwards. The youngsters in the ranks tried their best to keep a military countenance. They endeavored to achieve an expression which should be polite but firm, an air of having been through the same experience many times before. Only one or two old sergeants succeeded. The rest blushed under the cheers and entangling interest of the crowd and they could not keep the grins away when people shouted "Vive les Teddies" or threw roses at them. On that morning it was great to be young and a doughboy.

On and on they went past high walls and gardens to the edge of the city to a cemetery. There were speeches here and they were

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mostly French. Ribot spoke and Painlevé and Pershing. His was English and he said: "I hope, and I would like to say it that here on the soil of France and in the school of the French heroes, our American soldiers may learn to battle and to vanquish for the liberty of the world."

But the speech which left the deepest impression was the shortest of all. Colonel Stanton stood before the tomb of Lafayette and made a quick, sharp gesture which was broad enough to include the youngsters from Alabama and Texas and Massachusetts and Ohio and the rest. "Lafayette, we're here!" he said.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FRANCO-AMERICAN HONEYMOON

THE day after the Americans marched in Paris one of the French newspapers referred to the doughboys as "Roman Cæsars clad in khaki." The city set itself to liking the soldiers and everything American and succeeded admirably. Even the taxicab drivers refrained from overcharging Americans very much. School children studied the history of America and "The Star Spangled Banner." There were pictures of President Wilson and General Pershing in many shops and some had framed translations of the President's message to Congress. In fact, so eager were the French to take America to their hearts that they even made desperate efforts to acquire a working knowledge of baseball. *Excelsior*, an illustrated French daily, carried an action picture taken during a game played between

American ambulance drivers just outside of Paris. The picture was entitled: "A player goes to catch the ball, which has been missed by the catcher," and underneath ran the following explanation: "We have given in our number of yesterday the rules of baseball, the American national game, of which a game, which is perhaps the first ever played in France, took place yesterday at Colombes between the soldiers of the American ambulances. Here is an aspect of the game. The pitcher, or thrower of balls, whom one sees in the distance, has sent the ball. The catcher, or 'attrapeur,' who should restrike the ball with his wooden club, has missed it, and a player placed behind him has seized it in its flight."

The next day *L'Intransigeant* undertook the even more hazardous task of explaining American baseball slang. During the parade on the Fourth of July some Americans had greeted the doughboys with shouts of "ataboy." A French journalist heard and was puzzled. He returned to his office and looked in English dictionaries and various

works of reference without enlightenment. Several English friends were unable to help him and an American who had lived in Paris for thirty years was equally at sea. But the reporter worked it out all by himself and the next day he wrote: "Parisians have been puzzled by the phrase 'ataboy' which Americans are prone to employ in moments of stress or emotion. The phrase is undoubtedly a contraction of 'at her boy' and may be closely approximated by 'au travail, garçon.' " The writer followed with a brief history of the friendly relations of France and America and paid a glowing tribute to the memory of Lafayette.

The name for the American soldiers gave the French press and public no end of trouble. They began enthusiastically enough by calling them the "Teddies," but General Pershing, when interviewed one day, said that he did not think this name quite fitting as it had "no national significance." The French then followed the suggestion of one of the American correspondents and began to call the soldiers "Sammies," or as the French pronounce it,

“Sammies.” Although this name received much attention in French and American newspapers it has never caught the fancy of the soldiers in the American Expeditionary Army. Officers and men cordially despise it and no soldier ever refers to himself or a comrade as a “Sammy.” American officers have not been unmindful of the usefulness of a name for our soldiers. Major General Sibert, who commanded the first division when it arrived in France, posted a notice at headquarters which read: “The English soldier is called Tommy. The French soldier is called poilu. The Commanding General would like suggestions for a name for the American soldier.” At the end of the week the following names had been written in answer to the General’s request: “Yank, Yankee, Johnnie, Johnny Yank, Broncho, Nephew, Gringo, Liberty Boy, Doughboy.”

Now Doughboy is a name which the soldiers use, but strictly speaking, it refers only to an infantryman. The origin of the name is shrouded in mystery. One officer, probably an infantryman, has written, that the infantrymen

are called doughboys because they are the flower of the army. Another story has it that during some maneuvers in Texas an artilleryman, comfortably perched on a gun, saw a soldier hiking by in the thick sticky Texas mud. The mud was up to the shoetops of the infantryman and the upper part which had dried looked almost white. "Say," shouted the artilleryman, "what've you been doing? Walking in dough?" And so the men who march have been doughboys ever since.

Paris did not let the lack of a name come between her and the soldiers. The theaters gave the Americans almost as much recognition as the press. No musical show was complete without an American finale and each soubrette learned a little English, "I give you kees," or something like that, to please the doughboys. The vaudeville shows, such as those provided at the Olympia or the Alhambra, gave an even greater proportion of English speech. The Alhambra was filled with Tommies and doughboys on the night I went. Now and again the comedians had lapses of language and the Americans were forced to

let jokes go zipping by without response. It was a pity, too, for they were good jokes even if French. Presently, however, a fat comedian fell off a ladder and laughter became general and international. The show was more richly endowed with actresses than actors. The management was careful to state that all the male performers had fulfilled their military obligations. Thus, under the picture of Maurice Chevalier, a clever comedian and dancer, one read that Mons. Chevalier was wounded at the battle of Cutry, when a bullet passed between his lungs. The story added that he was captured by the Germans and held prisoner for twenty-six months before he escaped. It did not seem surprising therefore that Chevalier should be the gayest of funny men. Twenty-six months of imprisonment would work wonders with ever so many comedians back home.

And yet we Americans missed the old patter until there came a breath from across the sea. A low comedian came out and said to his partner in perfectly good English: "Well, didja like the show?" His partner said he didn't like the show. "Well, didja notice the trained

seals?" persisted the low comedian and the lower comedian answered: "No, the wind was against 'em." Laughter long delayed overcame us then, but it was mingled with tears. We felt that we were home again. The French are a wonderful people and all that, of course, but they're so darn far away.

Later there was a man who imitated Eddie Foy imperfectly and a bad bicycle act in which the performers called the orchestra leader "Professor" and shouted "Ready" to each other just before missing each trick. This bucked the Americans up so much that a lapse into French with Suzanne Valroger "dans son repertoire" failed to annoy anybody very much. The doughboys didn't care whether she came back with her repertoire or on it. Some Japanese acrobats and a Swedish contortionist completed the performance. There are two such international music halls in Paris as well as a musical comedy of a sort called "The Good Luck Girl." The feature of this performance is an act in which a young lady swings over the audience and invites the soldiers to capture the shoe dangling from her right foot. The

shoe is supposed to be very lucky and soldiers try hard to get it, standing up in their seats and snatching as the girl swings by. An American sergeant was the winner the night I went to the show, for he climbed upon a comrade's shoulder and had the slipper off before the girl had time to swing out very far. Later, when he went to the trenches, the sergeant took the shoe with him and he says that up to date he has no reason to doubt the value of the charm.

The most elaborate spectacle inspired by the coming of the Americans was at the Folies Bergères which sent its chorus out for the final number all spangled with stars. The leader of the chorus was an enormous woman, at least six feet tall, who carried an immense American flag. She almost took the head off a Canadian one night as he dozed in a stage box and failed to notice the violent manner in which the big flag was being swung. He awoke just in time to dodge and then he shook an accusing finger at the Amazon. "Why aren't you in khaki?" he said.

Restaurants as well as theaters were liberally sprinkled with men in the American uniform.

The enlisted men ate for the most part in French barracks and seemed to fare well enough, although one doughboy, after being served with spinach as a separate course, complained: "I do wish they'd get all the stuff on the table at once like we do in the army. I don't want to be surprised, I want to be fed." A young first lieutenant was scornful of French claims to master cookery. "Why, they don't know how to fry eggs," he said. "I've asked for fried eggs again and again and do you know what they do? They put 'em in a little dish and bake 'em."

Yet, barring this curious and barbarous custom in the cooking of eggs, the French chefs were able to charm the palates of Americans even in a year which bristled with food restrictions. There were two meatless days a week, sugar was issued in rations of a pound a month per person and bread was gray and gritty. The French were always able to get around these handicaps. The food director, for instance, called the ice cream makers together and ordered them to cease making their product in order to save sugar.

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“We have been using a substitute for sugar for seven months,” replied the merchants.

“Well, then,” said the food director, “it will save eggs.”

“We have hit upon a method which makes eggs unnecessary,” replied the ice cream makers.

“At any rate,” persisted the food director, “my order will save unnecessary consumption of milk.”

“We use a substitute for that, too,” the confectioners answered, and they were allowed to go on with their trade.

The cooks are even more ingenious than the confectioners. As long as they have the materials with which to compound sauces, meat makes little difference. War bread might be terrapin itself after a French chef has softened and sabled it with thick black dressing. Americans found that the French took food much more seriously than we do in America. Patrons always reviewed the *carte du jour* carefully before making a selection. It was not enough to get something which would do. The meal would fall something short of success if

the diner did not succeed in getting what he wanted most. No waiter ever hurried a soldier who was engaged in the task of composing a dinner. He might be a man who was going back to the trenches the next day and in such a case this last good meal would not be a matter to be entered upon lightly. After all, if it is a last dinner a man wants to consider carefully, whether he shall order *contrefilet à la Bourguignon* or *poulet roti à l'Espagnol*.

Whatever may be his demeanor while engaged in the business of making war or ordering a meal, the Frenchman makes his permission a real vacation. He talks a good deal of shop. The man at the next table is telling of a German air raid, only, naturally, he calls them Boches. A prison camp, he explains, was brilliantly illuminated so that the Boche prisoners might not escape under the cover of darkness. One night the enemy aviators came over that way and mistook the prison camp for a railroad station. They dropped a number of bombs and killed ten of their comrades. Everybody at the soldier's table regarded this as a good joke, more particularly as the nar-

rator vivified the incident by rolling his war bread into pellets and bombarding the table by way of illustration, accompanied by loud cries of "Plop! Plop!"

Practically every man on permission in Paris is making love to someone and usually in an open carriage or at the center table of a large restaurant. Nobody even turns around to look if a soldier walks along a street with his arm about a girl's waist. American officers, however, frowned on such exhibitions of demonstrativeness by doughboys and in one provincial town a colonel issued an order: "American soldiers will not place their arms around the waists of young ladies while walking in any of the principal thoroughfares of this town."

Still it was not possible to regulate romance entirely out of existence. "There was a girl used to pass my car every morning," said a sergeant chauffeur, "and she was so good looking that I got a man to teach me '*bon jour*,' and I used to smile at her and say that when she went by and she'd say '*bon jour*' and smile back. One morning I got an apple and I

handed it to her and said ‘*pour vous*’ like I’d been taught. She took it and came right back with, ‘Oh, I’m ever so much obliged,’ and there like a chump I’d been holding myself down to ‘*bon jour*’ for two weeks.”

There could be no question of the devotion of Paris to the American army. Indeed, so rampant was affection that it was occasionally embarrassing. One officer slipped in alighting from the elevator of his hotel and sprained his ankle rather badly. He was hobbling down one of the boulevards that afternoon with the aid of a cane when a large automobile dashed up to the curb and an elderly French lady who was the sole occupant beckoned to him and cried: “*Premier blessé.*” The officer hesitated and a man who was passing stepped up and said: “May I interpret for you?” The officer said he would be much obliged. The volunteer interpreter talked to the old lady for a moment and then he turned and explained: “Madame is desirous of taking you in her car wherever you want to go, because she says she is anxious to do something for the first American soldier wounded on the soil of France.”

The devotion of Paris was so obvious that it palled on one or two who grew fickle. I saw a doughboy sitting in front of the Café de la Paix one bright afternoon. He was drinking champagne of a sort and smoking a large cigar. The sun shone on one of the liveliest streets of a still gay Paris. It was a street made brave with bright uniforms. Brighter eyes of obvious non-combatants gazed at him with admiration. I was sitting at the next table and I leaned over and asked: "How do you like Paris?"

He let the smoke roll lazily out of his mouth and shook his head. "I wish I was back in El Paso," he said.

I found another soldier who was longing for Terre Haute. Him I came upon in the lounging room of a music hall called the Olympia. Two palpably pink ladies sat at the bar drinking cognac. From his table a few feet away the American soldier looked at them with high disfavor. Surprise, horror and indignation swept across his face in three waves as the one called Julie began to puff a cigarette after giving a light to Margot. He looked away at

last when he could stand no more, and recognizing me as a fellow countryman, he began his protest.

“I don’t like this Paris,” he said. “I’m in the medical corps,” he continued. “My home’s in Terre Haute. In Indiana, you know. I worked in a drug store there before I joined the army. I had charge of the biggest soda fountain in town. We used to have as many as three men working there in summer sometimes. Right at a good business corner, you know. I suppose we had almost as many men customers as ladies.”

“Why don’t you like Paris?” I interrupted.

“Well, it’s like this,” he answered. “Nobody can say I’m narrow. I believe in people having a good time, but——” and he leaned nearer confidentially, “I don’t like this Bohemia. I’d heard about it, of course, but I didn’t know it was so bad. You see that girl there, the one in the blue dress smoking a cigarette, sitting right up to the bar. Well, you may believe it or not, but when I first sat down she came right over here and said, ‘Hello, American. You nice boy. I nice girl. You

buy me a drink.' I never saw her before in my life, you understand, and I didn't even look at her till she spoke to me. I told her to go away or I'd call a policeman and have her arrested. I've been in Paris a week now, but I don't think I'll ever get used to this Bohemia business. It's too effusive, that's what I call it. I'd just like to see them try to get away with some of that business in Terre Haute."

Some of the visiting soldiers took more kindly to Paris as witness the plaint of a middle-aged Franco-American in the employ of the Y. M. C. A.:

"I'm a guide for the Young Men's Christian Association here in Paris," he said, "but I'm a little bit afraid I'm going to lose my job. They make up parties of soldiers at the Y. M. C. A. headquarters every day and turn them over to me to show around the city. Well, Monday I started out with twelve and came back with five and today I finished up with three out of eight. I can't help it. I've got no authority over them, and if they want to leave the party, what can I do? But it makes trouble for me at headquarters. Now, today,

for instance, I took them first of all to the Place Vendome. There were seven infantry-men and an artilleryman. They seemed to be interested in the column when I told them that it was made out of cannon captured by Napoleon. They wanted to know how many canon it took and what caliber they were and all that. Everything went all right until we started for the Madeleine. We passed a café on the way and one of the soldiers asked: 'What's this "vin" I see around on shops?' I told him that it was the French word for wine and that it was pronounced almost like our word 'van' only a little bit more nasal. They all looked at the sign then, and another soldier said: 'I suppose that "bières" there is "beers," isn't it?'

"I told him that it was and another guessed that 'brune ou blonde' must mean 'dark or light.' When I said that it did, he wanted to know if he couldn't stop and have one. I told him that I couldn't wait for him, as the whole trip was on a schedule and we had to be at the Madeleine at three o'clock. 'Well,' he said, 'I guess it'll be there tomorrow,' and he went into

the café. Another soldier said: 'Save a "blonde" for me,' and followed him, and that was two gone.

"After I had showed the rest the Madeleine I told them that I was going to take them to St. Augustin. The artilleryman wanted to know if that was another church. I said it was and he said he guessed he'd had enough for a day. I tried to interest him in the paintings in the chapel by Bouguereau and Brisset, but he said he wasn't used to walking so much anyway. He was no doughboy, he said, and he left us. We lost another fellow at Maxim's and the fifth one disappeared in broad daylight on the Boulevard Malesherbes. He can count up to twenty in French and he knows how to say: 'Où est l'hôtel St. Anne?' which is army headquarters, so I guess he's all right, but I haven't an idea in the world what became of him."

The high tide in the American conquest of Paris came one afternoon in July. I got out of a taxicab in front of the American headquarters in the Rue Constantine and found that a big crowd had gathered in the Esplanade

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des Invalides. Now and again the crowd would give ground to make room for an American soldier running at top speed. One of them stood almost at the entrance of the courtyard of "Invalides." His back was turned toward the tomb of Napoleon and he was knocking out flies in the direction of the Seine. Unfortunately it was a bit far to the river and no baseball has yet been knocked into that stream. It was a new experience for Napoleon though. He has heard rifles and machine guns and other loud reports in the streets of Paris, but for the first time there came to his ears the loud sharp crack of a bat swung against a baseball. Since he could not see from out the tomb the noise may have worried the emperor. Perhaps he thought it was the British winning new battles on other cricket fields. But again he might not worry about that now. He might hop up on one toe as a French caricaturist pictured him and cry: "Vive l'Angleterre."

One of the men in the crowd which watched the batting practice was a French soldier headed back for the front. At any rate he had his steel helmet on and his equipment was on

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his back. His stripes showed that he had been in the war three years and he had the croix de guerre with two palms and the medaille militaire. His interest in the game grew so high at last that he put down his pack and his helmet and joined the outfielders. The second or third ball hit came in his direction. He ran about in a short circle under the descending ball and at the last moment he thrust both hands in front of his face. The ball came between them and hit him in the nose, knocking him down.

His nose was a little bloody, but he was up in an instant grinning. He left the field to pick up his trench hat and his equipment. The Americans shouted to him to come back. He understood the drift of their invitation, but he shook his head. “C'est dangereux,” he said, and started for the station to catch his train for the front.

## CHAPTER V

### WITHIN SOUND OF THE GUNS

THE men had traveled to Paris in passenger coaches, but when it came time to move the first division to its training area in the Vosges our soldiers rode like all the other allied armies in the famous cars upon which are painted "Hommes 36; chevaux en long, 8." And, of course, anybody who knows French understands the caption to mean that the horses must be put in lengthwise and not folded. No restrictions are mentioned as to the method of packing the "hommes."

The journey lay through gorgeous rolling country which was all a sparkle at this season of the year. Presently the vineyards were left behind and the hills became higher. Now and again there were fringes of pine trees. At one point it was possible to see a French captive balloon floating just beyond the hilltops,

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but we could not hear the guns yet. French soldiers in troop trains and camps near the track cheered the Americans and even a few of the Germans inside a big stockade waved at the men who were moving forward to study war. The trains stopped at a little town which lay at the foot of a hill. It was a mean little town, but on the hill was the fine old tower of a castle which had once dominated the surrounding country.

From this town, which was chosen as divisional headquarters, regiments were sent northeast and northwest into tiny villages which were no more than a single line of houses along the roadway. A few one-story wooden barracks had been built for the Americans, but ninety per cent. of the men went into billets. They were quartered in the lofts of barns of the better sort. The billeting officers would not consider sheds where cattle had been kept. Few troops had been quartered in this part of the country previously and so the barns were moderately clean.

The effort to make cleanliness and sanitation something more than relative terms was

the first thing which really threatened Franco-American amity. The decision of American officers that all manure piles must be removed from in front of dwelling houses met a startled and universal protest. Elderly Frenchwomen explained with great feeling that the manure piles had been there as long as they could remember and that no one had ever come to any harm from them. The American officers insisted, and at last a grudging consent was forced. I saw one old lady almost on the point of tears as she watched the invaders demolish her manure pile. At last she could stand no more. "They make a lot of dust," she said critically, and went into the house.

A few days after the Americans arrived in camp came their instructors. A crack division of Alpine Chasseurs was chosen to teach the Americans. Nobody called these men froggies. They called them "chassers." It was enough to see them march to know that they were fighting men. Their stride was short and quick. Each step was taken as if the marcher was eager to have it over and done with so that he could take another. Even their buglers won

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admiration, for they had a trick of throwing their instruments in the air and catching them again that brought envy to the heart of every American band. Indeed, a good deal of friendly rivalry developed from the beginning and in the early days, at least, the French had all the better of it. They could lift heavier weights than our men, who averaged much younger. Little Frenchmen standing five feet three or four would seize a rifle close to the end of the bayonet and slowly raise it with stiff arm to horizontal and down again. American farmer boys tried and failed. Of course, this was a crack French division which drew its men from various organizations, while our division was just the average lot and perhaps not quite that since there was a larger percentage of recruits than is usually found in the regular army.

Although our men were somewhat out-classed by their instructors in these early days, they were game in their effort to keep up competition. Almost the first work to which the troops were set was trench digging. This is one of the most important arts of war and also

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the most tiresome. Somebody has said of the Canadians: "They will die in the last ditch, but they won't dig it." The Americans have a similar aversion for work with pick and shovel, but trench digging came to them as a competition. I saw a battalion of the chasseurs and a battalion of marines set to work in a field where every other blow of the pick hit a rock. There was no chance to loaf, for when a marine looked over his shoulder he could see the French picks going for dear life down at the other end of the trench. At four-thirty the men were told to call it a day. The chasseurs leaped out of their trench; threw down their tools, and began to sing at top voice a popular Parisian love ditty entitled "*Il faut de l'amour.*" One of the French officers told me afterwards that it was the invariable custom of his men to sing at the end of work, but the marines thought the "chasseurs" were merely showing off the excellent nature of their wind. More slowly the Americans clambered out of their trench, but they were ready when the last French note died

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away and piped up somewhat breathlessly: "Hail! Hail! the gang's all here!"

American company commanders were quick to appreciate the value of organized singing in the training of troops, and for the next few days the doughboys were drilled to lift their voices as well as their picks. Most of all, music was appreciated in the long hikes of the early training period. A good song did much to make a marching man forget that he had a fifty-pound pack on his back.

"I know I'm beginning to get a real company now," one captain told me, "because whenever they're beginning to feel tired they start to sing and freshen up." "No," he said, in reply to a question, "they didn't just start. It needed a little fixing. I noticed that when the Frenchmen stopped work they always started back to camp singing. 'We can do that,' I told my men when we started back. 'Let's hear a little noise.' Nothing happened. Nobody wanted to begin. They were scared the others would laugh at them. I can't carry a tune two feet, but I just struck up 'We'll hang the damned old Kaiser to a sour apple

tree' to the tune of 'John Brown's Body.' A few joined in, but most of them wouldn't open their mouths. I told 'em, 'I'm just going to keep on marching this company until everybody's in on the song. I don't care if we have to march all night.' 'That got 'em going. Now they like it. They're thinking up new songs every day. I can save my voice now."

One of the reasons for sending the men into the Vosges for training was to get them within sound of the guns, but it was almost a week before we heard any of the doings at the front. It was at night time that we first heard the guns. It was a still, windless night and along about eight o'clock they began. You couldn't be quite sure whether you heard them or felt them, but something was stirring. It felt or sounded a good deal as if some giant across the hills had slammed the door of his castle as he left home to take the morning train for business. Up at the northern end of the training area the sound of the guns was much more distinct. In fact, they were loud enough some nights to become identified in the mind as events and not mere rumblings. A Sammy

up in that village stopped our car one morning and asked if we couldn't give him a newspaper.

"I suppose you want to know how the baseball games are coming out," somebody suggested.

"To hell with baseball, I want to know about the war," said the soldier. "I'm with these mules," he said, pointing to half a dozen animals tethered on the bank of a canal. "I've been with them right from the beginning. I came over on the same steamer with 'em. I rode up with 'em in the train from —— and here we are again. I don't hear nothing. They could capture Berlin and nobody'd tell me about it. All I do is feed these damned mules. 'Big Bill,' that one on the end, is sick, and I've got to hang around and give him a pill every six hours. I wish he'd choke. I don't like him as well as the rest of the mules and I hate 'em all.

"It'll be fine, won't it, when somebody asks me: 'Daddy, what did you do in the great war?' and I say: 'Oh, I sat up with a sick mule.' "

Back of the hills from some indefinite dis-

tance came the sound of big guns. They raged persistently for ten minutes and then quit. "Big Bill" began to rear around and kick. The soldier cursed him.

"Those guns were going like that all night, but mostly around two o'clock," he said. "No-body around here knows anything about it. I wish I could get hold of an American paper and find out something about that fight. I've sent to Memphis for *The News Scimitar*, but somehow it don't seem to get here. I wish those guns was near enough to drop something over here on the mules, especially 'Big Bill,' but I'm out of luck."

The nearest approach of the war was in the air. It wasn't long before German planes began to scout over the territory occupied by the Americans. One battalion almost saw an air fight. It would have seen it if the Major hadn't said "Attention!" just then. The battalion was drilling in a big open meadow when there came from the East first a whirr and then a machine. The machine, flying high, circled the field. The soldiers who were standing at ease stared up at the visitor, but it was too

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high to see the identifying marks. Soon there was no doubt that the machine was German, for little white splotches appeared in the sky. It looked as if Charlie Chaplin had thrown a cream pie at heaven and it had splattered. An anti-aircraft gun concealed in a woods several miles away was firing at the Boche. Presently the firing ceased and there was a whirr from the West. A French plane flew straight in the direction of the German, who climbed higher and higher. As the planes drew nearer it was possible to see machine gun flashes, but just then the Major called his men to attention. Regulations provide that eyes must look straight ahead, but it was a hard test for recruits and there may have been one or two who stole a glance up there where the planes were fighting. In each case an officer was on the culprit like a flash.

“Keep your head still,” shouted a lieutenant. “That’s a private fight. It’s got nothing to do with you.”

Soon the German turned and flew back in the direction of his own lines and when the necks of the doughboys were unfettered and

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they could look up again the sky was clear. Even the cream puff splotches were gone.

On another afternoon a Boche plane flew over the entire American area. It circled a field in divisional headquarters where a baseball game was in progress and flew home.

“I know why that German flew home after he reached ——,” an officer explained. “Don’t you see? He was trying to find out if we were Americans and that baseball game proved it to him.”

The greatest aerial display occurred on a morning when a French officer was instructing an American company in the art of trench digging. He spoke no English, but an interpreter of a sort was making what shift he could. The doughboys tried to look interested and didn’t succeed. It was harder when out from behind a cloud came one aeroplane, then another and another. When half a dozen had appeared from behind the cloud one doughboy could stand the strain no longer.

“Look,” he shouted, “they’re hatching them up there.”

The French instructor finally granted a re-

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cess of ten minutes but before the time was up the planes had maneuvered out of sight. In spite of all the German activity in the air only one attempt was made to bomb the Americans during the summer. A single bomb was dropped on a village where the marines were stationed, but it did no damage.

The second week in the training area found the doughboys increasing their curriculum to include bombs and machine guns. It had not been possible to do much in the finer arts of war previously because of the absence of interpreters. A number of these had been mobilized now but they varied in quality. As one American officer put it, "Interpreters may be divided into three classes: those who know no English; those who know no French; and those who know neither."

However, the Americans managed to get their instruction in some way or other. No interpreters were needed with the machine guns. Instead each American company was divided up into little groups and a chasseur placed at the head of each group. I watched the instruction and found that little language

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was needed. The Frenchman would take a machine gun or automatic rifle apart and holding up each part give its French name. The Americans paid no particular attention to the outlandish terms which the French used for their machine gun parts, but they were alert to notice the manner in which the gun was put together and in the group in which I was standing two Americans were able to put the gun together without having any parts left over after a single demonstration.

Of course, a little language was used. Some of the marines had picked up a little very villainous French in Hayti and they made what shift they could with that. A few French Canadians and an occasional man from New Orleans could converse with the chasseurs and one or two phrases had been acquired by men hitherto entirely ignorant of French. “Qu'est-ce-que c'est?” was used by the purists as their form of interrogation, but there were others who tried to make “combien” do the work. “Combien,” which we pronounced “come bean,” was stretched for many purposes. I have heard it used and accepted as an equiva-

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lent for "whereabouts," "what did you say," "why," "which one" and "will you please show us once more how to put that machine gun together."

Not only did the Americans show an aptitude for getting the hang of the mechanism of the machine gun and the automatic rifle, but they shot well with them after a little bit of practice.

The first man I watched at work with the automatic rifle was green. He had taken the gun apart and put it together again with an occasional "regardez" and bit of demonstration from one of the Frenchmen, but the weapon was not yet his pal. He picked the gun up somewhat gingerly and aimed at the line of targets a couple of hundred yards away. Then he pulled the trigger and the bucking thing, which seemed to be intent on wriggling out of his arms, sprayed the top of the hill with bullets. The French instructor made a laughing comment and an American who spoke the language explained, "He says you ought to be in the anti-aircraft service."

The next man to try his luck was a non-

commissioned officer long in the army. He patted the gun and wooed it a little in whispers before he shot. It was a French gun, to be sure, but the language of firearms is international. "Behave, Betsy," he said and she did. He sprayed shots along the line of targets at the bottom of the hill as the gun clattered away with all the clamor of a riveting machine at seven in the morning. When they looked at the targets they found he had scored thirty hits out of thirty-four and some were bull's-eyes. The French instructor was so pleased that he stepped forward as if to hug the ancient sergeant but the veteran's look of horror dissuaded him.

Bombing proved the most popular part of training and particularly as soon as it was possible to work with the live article. First of all dummy bombs were issued. A French officer carefully explained that the bomb should be thrown after four moves, counting one, two, three, four, as he posed something like a shot putter before he let the bomb go with an overhand, stiff, armed fling. He illustrated the method several times, but the first American

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to throw sent the bomb spinning out on a line just as if he were hurrying a throw to first from deep short. The Frenchman reproved him and explained carefully that, although it might be possible to throw a bomb a long way in the manner in which a baseball is thrown, it was necessary for a bomber to hurl many missiles and that he must preserve his arm. He also pointed out that the bomb would never land in the trenches of the enemy unless it was thrown with a considerable arc.

The men then kept to the exercises laid down by the instructor, but just before they stopped one or two could not resist the temptation of again "putting something on to it" and letting the bomb sail out fast. One lefthander who had pitched for a season in the Southern League was anxious to make some experiments to see if he couldn't throw a bomb with an out curve but he was informed that such an accomplishment would have no military utility.

The first American wounded in France was the victim of a bombing accident. A soldier threw a live bomb more than thirty meters from a trench. When the bomb burst a fragment

came whirling back in some curious manner and fell into a box of grenades upon which a lieutenant was sitting. The fragment cut the pin of one of the bombs and the whole box went off with a bang. The lieutenant received only a slight cut on his forehead, but a French interpreter thirty yards away was knocked unconscious and lost the sight of his right eye. This Frenchman had spent two years under fire at Verdun without being scratched and here was his first wound come upon him on a quiet afternoon in a meadow miles from the lines.

The men threw bombs from deep trenches and they were instructed to keep cover closely after hurling a grenade just as if there was a German trench across the way. But curiosity was too strong for them. Each wanted to see where his particular bomb hit and how much earth it would tear up. The bombs made only small scars in the earth, but they sent fragments of steel casing flying in all directions and several men were cut about the face by splinters.

The seeming inability of the American to

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visualize battle conditions in training retards his progress in spite of his aptitude in other directions. A French officer was directing a platoon of Americans one day in skirmishing. They were to fire a round, run forward twenty paces, throw themselves flat and run forward again. One doughboy would raise himself up on his elbows and look about. The Frenchman, very much excited, ran over to him and said, "You must keep your head down or you will get shot. You must remember that bullets are flying all about you."

As soon as the instructor's back was turned the soldier was up on his elbows again. "Hell," he said, "there ain't any bullets."

In later phases of training the inferiority of the American to the French in imagination showed clearly. French veterans or recruits for that matter could work themselves up to a frenzy in sham battles and dash into an empty trench with a shout as if it were filled with Germans. Americans could not do that. They found it difficult to forget that practice was just practice.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUNNY FRANCE

LATER on “Sunny France” became a mocking byword uttered by wet and muddy men, but during the early days in the training area no one had any just complaint about the weather. Come to think of it there wasn’t anything very wrong with those early days in rural France. Five o’clock was pretty early for getting up but the sun could do it and keep cheerful. It was glorious country with hills and forests and plowed fields and red roofed villages and smooth white roads. The country people didn’t throw their hats in the air like Parisians, but they were kindly though calm.

“Down in —,” said a little doughboy who came from an Indiana farm, “everybody you meet says ‘bon jour’ to you whether they know you or not. That means ‘good morning.’ I

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was in Chicago once and they don't do it there."

It wasn't Eden though. There was the tobacco situation against that theory. To a good many soldiers, pleasant weather and kindly folk and ample rations meant nothing much. These were minor things. The quartermaster had no Bull Durham. When the supply of American tobacco and cigarettes ran out the men tried the French products but not for long. "So they call these *Grenades*," muttered a soldier as he examined a popular French brand of cigarettes, "I guess that's because you'd better throw 'em away right after you set 'em going."

French matches were less popular than French tobacco. The kind they sold in our town and thereabouts were all tipped with sulphur and usually exploded with a blue flame maiming the smoker and amusing the spectators. Political economists and others interested in the law of supply and demand may be interested to know that when the tobacco famine was at its height a package of Bull Durham worth five cents in America was sold by

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one soldier to another for five francs. This shortage has since been relieved from several sources, but there has never been more tobacco than the soldiers could smoke.

Reading matter was also ardently desired during the early months in the Vosges. An enterprising storekeeper in one town sent a hurry call to Paris for English books and a week later she proudly displayed the following volumes on her shelves: "The Life of Dean Stanley," "Sermons by the Rev. C. H. Spurgeon," "The Jubilee Book of Cricket," "The Reminiscences of Sir Henry Hawkins (Lord of Brampton)," and "The Recollections of the Rt. Hon. Sir Algernon West."

A few companies had libraries of their own. I wonder who made the selection of titles. The volumes I picked out at random in one village were: "The Family Life of Heinrich Heine," "Fourteen Weeks in Astronomy," "Recollections and Letters of Renan," "Education and the Higher Life," "Bible Stories for the Young," and "Henry the Eighth and His Six Wives." The librarian said that the last was the most popular book in the collection al-

though several readers admitted that it did not come up to expectations. Just as I was going out the top sergeant came in to return a book. I asked him what it was. He said, "It's a book called 'When Patty Went to College.' "

Our town was big and had moving pictures twice a week, but up the line in the little villages there was no such source of amusement. After the men had been in training for a week or more, a French Red Cross outfit stopped at one of the villages with a traveling movie outfit and announced that they would show a picture that night. According to the announcement the picture was "Charlot en 'Le Vagabond.'" It sounded foreign and forbidding. The doughboys anticipated trouble with the titles and the closeups of what the heroine wrote and all the various printed words which go to make a moving picture intelligible. Still they were patient when the title of the picture was flashed on the screen and they tried to look interested. The first scene was a road winding up to a distant hill and down the highway with eccentric gait there walked a little man strangely reminis-

cent. He drew nearer and nearer and as the figure came into full view the soldier in front of me could stand the strain no longer. He jumped to his feet.

“I’m a son of a gun,” he shouted, “if it isn’t Charlie Chaplin.”

Recognition upon the part of the audience was instantaneous and enthusiasm unbounded. If the Americans go out tomorrow and capture Berlin they cannot possibly show more joy than they did at the sight of Charlie Chaplin in France. Never again will the French be able to fool them by disguising him as “Charlot.”

After a bit the soldiers learned to entertain themselves and several companies developed a number of talented performers. The first company show I attended mixed boxing and music. They began with boxing. There was a short intermission during which the first tenor fixed up a bloody nose. He had received a bit the worst of it in the heavyweight bout. The other members of the quartet gave him cotton and encouragement. Finally he put on his shirt and hitching up his voice,

began, "Naught but a few faded roses can my sweet story tell." His comrades joined him at "My heart was ever light," and they finished the ballad in perfect alignment.

Almost all the songs were sentimental and many were old. They had "Dearie," and "Where the River Shannon Flows," and that one about Ireland falling out of Heaven (just as if the devil himself had not done the very same thing). Later there were "Mother Machree" and "Old Kentucky Home." Patriotism was not neglected. "When I Get Back Home Again to the U. S. A." was the favorite among the recent war songs. The only savor of army life in the program on this particular evening was in a couple of Mexican songs brought up from the border by men who went to get Villa. They brought back "Cuacaracha" with all its seventeen obscene Spanish verses. There was also one parody inspired by this war and sung to the tune of "My Little Girl, I'm Dreaming of You." It went something like this:

America, I'm dreaming of you  
And I long for you each day

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America, I'm fighting for you  
Tho' you're many miles away  
We'll knock the block right off the Kaiser  
And we'll drive them 'cross the Rhine—  
And then we'll sail back home to you, dear  
To the tune of "Wacht am Rhein"!

The American soldier does not seem to be much of a song maker. Songs by soldiers and for soldiers are not common with us yet. We have nothing as close to the spirit of the trenches as the British ditty "I want to go home," which always leaves the auditor in doubt as to whether he should take it seriously and weep or humorously and laugh. Possibly there is something of both elements in the song. The mixture has been typical of the British attitude toward the war. Here is the song:

I want to go 'ome  
I want to go 'ome  
The Maxims they spit  
And the Johnsons they roar  
I don't want to go to the front any more  
Oh take me over the seas  
Where the Alley-mans can't get at me  
Oh my; I don't want to die,  
I want to go 'ome.

The American army is still looking for a song. None of the new ones has achieved universal popularity. However the many who heard the quartet of Company L sing on this particular evening seemed to have no objection to the old songs. In fact they were new to many in the audience for as the concert went on French soldiers joined the audience and townspeople hung about the edges of the crowd. They listened politely and applauded, though indeed one must get a strange impression of America if his introduction is through our popular songs. Such a foreigner is in danger of believing that ours is a June land in which the moon is always shining upon a young person known as "little girl." Yet the French expressed no astonishment at the songs. Only one feature puzzled them profoundly. At the end of a particularly effective song the captain said, "Those men sang that very well. Bring 'em each a glass of water."

No villager could quite understand why a man who had committed no more palpable crime than tenor singing should be forced to

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partake of a drink which is cold, tasteless and watery.

Most the villages in our part of France had only one dimension. They consisted of a line of houses on either side of the roadway and they were always huddled together. Land is too valuable in France to waste it on lawns and suchlike. Some of the villages were tiny and shabby, but none was too small or too mean to be without its little café. It took the doughboys some little time to get over their interest in the startling fact that champagne was within the reach of the working man, but they went back to beer in due course and now champagne is among the things which shopkeepers must not sell to American soldiers. The prohibition of the sale of cognac and champagne is all that the army needs. Beer and light wines are not a menace to the health or behavior of our army. Beer is by far the most popular drink and it would be an ambitious man indeed who would seek the slightest deviation from sobriety in the thin war beer of France. He might drown.

Absolute prohibition for the army in France

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would be well nigh impossible. It would mean that every inn and shop and railroad station and farmhouse would have to be classed as out of bounds. In fact prohibition could not be enforced unless our soldiers were ordered never to venture within four walls. Wine is to be had under every roof in France and you can get it also in not a few places where the roof has been shot to pieces. The French are interested in temperance just now. On many walls posters are exhibited showing a German soldier and a black bottle with the caption, "They are both the enemies of France," but when a Frenchman talks of temperance or prohibition or the abolition of the liquor traffic he never thinks of including wine or beer. The civil authorities of France would not be much use in helping the American army enforce a bone-dry order. They simply wouldn't understand it.

There was some excessive drinking when the army first came to France but it has been checked. A number of influences have made for discretion. One of the most potent is the opportunity for promotion in an army in the

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field. Officers have been quick to point this out to their men. One captain called his company together in the early days and said, "Some of the men in this company are going out and getting pinko, stinko, sloppy drunk. Any man who gets drunk goes in the guard house of course and more than that he will get no promotion from me. I'm going to pick my sergeants from the fellows that have got sense. You may notice that some of the men who drink are old soldiers. Don't take an example from that. Remember that's why they're old soldiers. There isn't any sense in blowing all your money in for booze. Now if I took my pay in a lump at the end of a month I could buy every café in this town and I could stay drunk for a year. That would be fine business, wouldn't it?"

"I guess maybe I exaggerated a little about the length of time I could stay drunk," the captain told me afterwards, "but do you know that talk seems to have done the trick."

One factor which worked for temperance was the French fashion of making drinking deliberate and social. When an American can

be induced to sit down to his potion he is comparatively safe. These little village cafés did no harm after the first brief period when the American soldier had his fling and they served the good purpose of encouraging fraternization between doughboy and poilu.

The contact with French soldiers brought no great vocabulary to our men but if they learned few words they did get the hang of making their wants understood. In a week or two innkeepers or women in shops had no trouble at all in attending to the wants of Americans. Probably the French people made somewhat faster linguistic progress than the soldiers. The Americans were willing to be met at least halfway. When I asked one doughboy, "How do you get along with the French? Can you make them understand you?" he said, "Why, they're coming along pretty well. I think most of 'em will pick it up in time."

But there was one French word the soldiers had to learn. That was "fineesh." The children forced that word upon them. They were always at the heels of the American soldiers.

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They galloped the doughboys up and down the village streets in furious piggyback charges. They borrowed jam from company cooks and rode in the supply trucks. Of course there had to be an end to the rides, sometimes, and even to the jam and the only way to convince the children of France that an absolute unshakable limit had been reached was to thrust two hands aloft and cry "fineesh." The old women liked the doughboys too because they would draw water from the wells for them and occasionally lend a hand in moving wood or wheat or fodder. Nor do I mean to imply that the younger women of the little villages did not esteem the doughboys. "Tell 'em back home that there aren't any good looking women in France," was the message that ever so many soldiers asked me to convey to anxious individuals in America. I hand the message on but must refuse to pass upon its sincerity.

American officers got along well with the French but they never reached the same degree of chumminess that the men did. They met French officers at more or less formal

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luncheons and had to go through a routine of speeches largely concerned with Lafayette and Rochambeau and Washington. Poilus and doughboys did not go so far back for their subjects of conversation. The American enlisted man had a great advantage over his officer in the matter of language. He might know less French, but he was much more ready to experiment. An officer did not like to make mistakes. His was defensive French, a weapon to be used guardedly in cases of extreme need. When a visiting officer hurled a compliment at him he replied, but he seldom took the initiative. After all he was an American officer and he feared to make himself ridiculous by poor pronunciation and worse grammar. The soldier had no such scruples. He saw no reason why he should be any more abashed by French grammar than by English and as for pronunciation he followed the advice of a little pamphlet called "The American in France" which was rushed out by some French firm for sale to the American army. In the matter of pronunciation the book said, "Since pronunciation is the most difficult part

of any language the publishers of this book have decided to omit it.” The soldiers were ready to adopt this method and only wished that it could be extended to other things. To trench digging for instance.

The most daring man in the use of an unfamiliar language was not a soldier but a second lieutenant. He took great pride in his talent for pantomime and asserted that his vocabulary of some thirty words and his gestures filled all his needs. He was somewhat startled though on an afternoon when he went into a shop to purchase “B. V. D.’s” and found the store in charge of the young daughter of the proprietor. Pantomime seemed hardly the thing and so he paused long to think up a word for the garment he wanted or some approximation. At last he smiled and exclaimed brightly, “Chemise pour jambes, s’il vous plaît.”

Stores were not the strong point of our bit of France. We soon came to regard our town as a metropolis because people journeyed there to make “shopping tours.” One afternoon I marked fifteen visiting soldiers with their eyes glued against a shop window which

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displayed half a dozen electric flashlights, two quarts of champagne, a French-English dictionary and a limited assortment of postcards. These, of course, were barred from the mail by censorship but the soldiers collected them to be taken home after the war.

“These French postcards aren’t exactly what some of the boys back home are going to expect,” one soldier admitted. “I went to three shops now but the others have been ahead of me and all I could get was these two. One’s a picture called ‘l’eglise’ and the other’s ‘la maison de Jeanne d’Arc.’ ”

The shops had hard work in keeping up with more commodities than picture postcards. There seemed to be an insatiable demand for canned peaches and sardines. Somehow or other men who have been on a long march simply crave either sardines or canned peaches. The doughboys did a good deal of eating at their own expense. Army food was plentiful and moderately varied. Beans and corned beef hash were served a good many times perhaps, but there was no lack of fresh meat and there was plenty of jam and of carrots and onions

and heavy gravy. Food, however, was an outlet for spending money and in some villages the men got so eager that they would buy anything. Little traveling shops in wagons came through the smaller villages in the northern part of the training area loaded with all sorts of gimcracks intended for the peasant trade. The peddlers had no time to put in a special line for the soldiers. They found that it was not necessary. Desperate men with pockets full of money would purchase even the imitation tortoise shell sidecombs which the itinerant merchants had to sell.

The purchasing capacity of the soldier was not limited to his pay alone. The villagers were wildly excited about the white bread issued to the American army. It was the first they had seen since the second year of the war. One old lady seized a loaf which was presented to her and crying "il est beau," sat down upon a doorstep and began to eat the bread as if it were cake. The rate of exchange fluctuated somewhat but there were days when a loaf of white bread could be exchanged for a whole roast chicken.

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The eagerness of the American soldier to spend his money had the result of tempting French storekeepers to raise their prices and as the cost of living mounted the civilian population began to complain. Even the soldiers had suspicions at last that they were being charged too much in some stores and the American officers took over price control as another of their many responsibilities.

“I went to the mayor,” one town major explained, “and I said, ‘Look here, Bill, I don’t mind the shopkeepers putting a little something over. All I ask is that they just act reasonable. They’ll get all the money in time anyhow, and so I wish you’d tip them off not to be in so much of a hurry.’ He couldn’t talk any English, that mayor couldn’t, but the interpreter told him about it and he went right to the front for us. From that day to this we’ve had only one complaint about anything in our village. That came from an old lady who had some doughboys billeted in a barn next to the shed where she kept her sheep. She came to me and said the soldiers talked so much at night that the sheep couldn’t sleep.”

## CHAPTER VII

### PERSHING

NOBODY will ever call him “Papa” Pershing. He is a stepfather to the inefficient and even when he is pleased he says little. In the matter of giving praise the General is a homeopath. For that reason he can gain enormous effect in the rare moments when he chooses to compliment a man or an organization. Pershing believes that discipline is the foundation of an army.

“I think,” said one young American officer, “that his favorite military leader is Joshua because he made the sun and the moon stand at attention.” In other words Pershing is a soldiers’ soldier. No man can strike such hard blows as he does and leave no scars. There are men here and there in the army who do not love him but their criticism almost invariably ends, “but I guess I’ll have to admit that he’s a good soldier.”

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Pershing is not a disciplinarian merely for the sake of discipline but he believes that it is the gauge of the temper of any military organization. His interest in detail is insatiable. He can read a man's soul through his boots or his buttons. Next to the Kaiser, Pershing hates nothing so much as rust and dust and dirt. Perhaps round shoulders should go in the list as well, and pockets. Certainly he makes good the things he preaches. There is no finer figure in any army in Europe. The General is fit from the tip of his glistening boots to his hat top. We saw him once after he had walked through a front line trench on a rainy day. There were sections of that trench where the mud was over a man's shoetops and the back area which had to be crossed before the trench system was reached was a great lake of casual water fed at its fringes by roaring rain torrents. And yet the general came out of the trench without a speck of mud on his boots in spite of the fact that he had plunged along with no apparent regard for his footing.

There was dust behind him, though, on the

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afternoon he first came to the training area to see his men. News reached our town that the general was up in the northern end of the training zone and moving fast. An officer passing by gave me a lift in his car and when we arrived at the next village half a dozen soldiers who were sitting on a bench jumped up for dear life and jarred themselves to the very heels with the stiffest of military salutes.

The officer grinned. "Pershing's in town," he said and so he was.

We found him in a kitchen talking about onions to a cook. He asked each soldier in turn what sort of food he was getting. Some were too frightened to do more than mumble an inaudible answer. A few said, "Very good, sir." And one or two had complaints. The General listened to the complaints attentively and in each case pressed his questions so as to make the soldier be absolutely concrete in his answers. Next he turned upon an officer and wanted to know just what the sewage system of the town was. The officer was a dashing major and he seemed ill at ease when Pershing

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asked how many days a week he inspected the garbage dump.

“That isn’t enough,” said the General when the major answered. “I want you to pay more attention to those things.”

From the kitchen he went into every billet in the village. In two he climbed up the ladders to see what sort of sleeping quarters the men had in their lofts. In one billet a soldier stole a look over his shoulder at the General as he passed. Pershing turned immediately.

“That’s not the way to be a soldier,” he said. “You haven’t learned the first principle of being a soldier.” He turned to a second lieutenant. “This man doesn’t stand at attention properly,” he explained. “I want you to make him stand at attention for five minutes.”

The next offender was a captain who had one hand in his pocket while giving an order. The General spoke to him just as severely as he had to the enlisted man. Then he was into his car and away to the next village.

Pershing is always on the move. One of his aides told me that he never had more than five minutes’ notice of where the General was

going or how long he would stay. No man in the army has covered so much territory as Pershing. He has been in practically every village occupied by the American troops. He has inspected every hospital and every training camp. One day he will be at a port looking at the accommodations which are being made for incoming vessels and on the next he will have jumped from the base to a front line trench. He has been on all the Western fronts except the Italian. His French and British and Belgian hosts find him a most ambitious guest. He wants to see everything. Once while observing a French offensive he expressed a desire to go forward and see a line of trenches which had just been captured from the Germans. The French tried to dissuade him but the General complained that he could not see just how things were going from any other position and so into the German trench he went.

Pershing has developed in France. Like every other man in the American army he has had to study modern warfare, but more than that he has caught something of the spirit of

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the French. He has acquired some of their ability to put a gesture into command, to utilize personality in the inspiration of troops. He is not yet the equal of the French in this respect. Joffre, for instance, fully realized the military usefulness of his enormous popularity and capitalized it. It was not mere luck that he became a tradition. Pétain, while by no means the equal of Joffre on the personal side, knows how to talk to soldiers and to townsfolk and to make himself a big human force.

While he is still a homeopath, General Pershing realizes more than he ever did before the value of a pat on the back given at the right time. I saw him do one of those little gracious things in a base hospital which was caring for the first American wounded. A youthful doughboy was lying flat on his back wondering just how long it was going to be before supper time came round when all of a sudden there was a clatter at the door. The doughboy was afraid it was going to be some more nurses and doctors. They had bothered him a lot by bandaging up his arm every little

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while and it hurt, but when he looked up at the foot of his bed there stood the man with four stars on his shoulders. The little doughboy grinned a bit nervously. He thought it was funny that he should be lying on his back and General Pershing standing up.

The General was somewhat nervous and embarrassed, too. He still lacks a little of the French feeling for the dramatic in the doing of these little things. He had to clear his throat once and then he said, "I want to congratulate you. I envy you. There isn't a man in the army who wouldn't like to be in your place. You have brought home to the people of America the fact that we are in the war."

The doughboy didn't say anything, but the nurse who made the rounds that evening wondered why a patient who was doing so well should have a pulse hitting up to ninety-six.

Earlier in the summer General Pershing encountered some far more embarrassing tests. He had to handle bouquets. The donor was usually a French girl and a very little one. When Pershing and Pétain made a joint trip

through the American army zone there were two little girls and two bouquets in each village. General Pétain, after receiving his bouquet, would bend over gracefully and kiss the little girl, adding one or two kindly phrases immediately following "ma petite." General Pershing began by patting the little girls on the head, but he realized it was not enough and after a bit he began to kiss them, too; only once or twice he got tangled up in their hats and found it hard to maintain military dignity. He handled the flowers gingerly. He seemed to regard each bouquet as a bomb which would explode in five seconds but each time there was some aide ready to step forward and relieve him.

The attitude of the average West Pointer towards his men is generally speaking the same as that of General Pershing. Some observers think the West Point attitude too strict, but I was inclined to believe that the men from the academy handled men better than the reserve officers. They are strict, it is true, but at the same time they have been trained to look after the needs of their men closely.

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The trouble with the average reserve officer is that he has not had time to learn how much he must father his men and mother them, too, for that matter. He does not know probably just how dependent the average soldier is upon his officer.

Perhaps the strictest officer of all is the man who was once a non-com. The former doughboy knows the tricks of the enlisted man and he is determined that nobody shall put anything over on him. He is often just a little bit afraid that the soldiers are going to trade on the fact that he was once an enlisted man. I once saw a soldier offer some cigars to two officers. One of the officers was a West Pointer and he laughed and took a cigar but the former non-com. refused very sternly. He could not afford to be indebted to an enlisted man.

I do not wish to imply that the men who come up from the ranks do not make good officers. As a matter of fact they are among the best, once their preliminary self-consciousness has worn off. The transition from stripes to bars is perfect torture to some of

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them. One company had a crack soldier who had been a sergeant for seven years. He was recommended for promotion and was sent to an officers' training school in France. He did very well but just a week before he was to receive his commission he succeeded in gaining permission to be dropped from the school and go back to his old company as sergeant. At the last minute he had decided that he did not want to be an officer.

I watched him put a company through its drill two days after his return. They moved with spirit and precision under his commands but when it was all over I found one reason why he didn't want to be an officer.

"That was very good today," he said. "You done well."

The first lieutenant smiled. He had a right to smile, too, for the return of the sergeant to his company had almost cut his work in half. He knew his value well enough.

"The best I can do is teach the men," he said. "It takes an old sergeant to learn them."

## CHAPTER VIII

### MEN WITH MEDALS

GENERAL PÉTAIN was the first of many famous Frenchmen who came to see the American troops in training. He also had the additional object of reviewing the chasseurs and of distributing medals, for this crack division had been withdrawn from one of the most active sectors to instruct the doughboys. General Pershing accompanied Pétain. The blue devils were drawn up in formation in the middle of a big meadow cupped within hills. The seven men who were to be honored stood in a line in front of the division. Six were officers and they awaited the pleasure of the general with their swords held at attention. The seventh man who stood at the right of the little line was an old sergeant with a great flowing gray and white mustache. The rifle which he held in front of him overtopped him by at least a foot.

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The ceremony began with a fanfare by the trumpeters. As the last notes came tumbling back from the hills Pétain moved forward. We found that he was not so tall as Pershing nor quite as straight. The French leader is also a little gray and about his waist there is just a suggestion of the white man's burden. But he is soldierly for all that and his eyes are marvelously keen and steady. His tailor deserved a decoration. The general wore only one medal, but that was as large as the badge of a country sheriff. It was a great silver shield hung about his neck and indicated that he was a commander of the Legion of Honor. He stopped in front of the first officer in the little line waiting to be honored and spoke to him for a moment. Then he pinned a red ribbon on his coat and kissed the man first on the left cheek and then on the right. The doughboys looked on in amazement.

"Well, I'll be damned," said one under his breath, "it's true."

Four men received the red ribbons, but the other three were down only for the military medal which is a high decoration but less es-

teemed than the Legion of Honor. No kisses went with the green and yellow ribbons of the military medal but only handshakes. Pétain stopped in front of the old sergeant at the end of the line and looked at him for a minute without speaking. Then he called an orderly.

“This man has three palms on his croix de guerre,” said Pétain.

Now a palm means that soldier has been cited for conspicuous bravery in the report of the entire army.

“The military medal is not enough for this man,” continued Pétain. “Step forward,” he said.

The old sergeant trembled a little as he stood a tiny, solitary gray figure in front of the whole division.

“Bring back the trumpets,” Pétain commanded and for the lone poilu the fanfare was sounded again.

“I make you a chevalier of the Legion of Honor,” said the commander in chief of the French army to the old sergeant, and after he had pinned the red ribbon to his breast he added a hug to the conventional two kisses.

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The poilu moved back to the ranks steadily, but as soon as the general had turned his back the sergeant pulled out his handkerchief and wept. The soldiers greeted their comrade with cheers and laughter.

“Now,” said Pétain turning to Pershing, “let’s take it easy for a little while. I’ve seen plenty of reviews.”

The French general walked across the space cleared for the review and began to talk with people in the fringe of spectators gathered around the edge of the meadow. He talked easily without any seeming condescension.

“How are you, my little man?” he said, patting a boy on the head. “In what military class are you?”

Encouraged by his father the boy said that he was in the class of 1928.

“Oh,” said the general, “that’s a long time off. We shall have beaten the Boches before then.”

Next it was a peasant girl who attracted his attention.

“Where have you come from?” he inquired with as much apparent interest as if he were

talking with a soldier just back from Berlin. "That was a long walk just to see soldiers," he said when the girl told him that she lived in a little village about ten miles distant. "But we are glad to have you here," he added.

And so he moved on down the line with handshakes for the grownups, pats on the head for little boys and kisses for little girls. He turned back to his reviewing station then and the French troops swept by with brave display. They were very smart and brisk, horse, foot and artillery, but Pétain found a few things to criticize although he mingled praise generously with censure. He told the officers to know their men and to get on such terms with them that the soldiers would not be afraid to speak freely. He told of reforms which he planned to introduce in the French army. He favored longer leaves from the front, he said, and better transportation for the poilus.

"I shall have time tables made for the men on leave," he said and then for an instant he became the shrewd French business man rather than the dashing general.

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“I have figured out,” he explained, “that the army can afford to sell these time tables for five sous. It wouldn’t do to give them away. Nobody would value them then.”

A week later we had another visitor. French generals and all their resplendent aides clicked their heels together and stood at attention as this civilian passed by. He was a short stoutish man in blue serge knickerbockers and a dark yachting cap. His tailor deserved no decoration for this seemed a secondary sort of costume and headgear in a group loaded down with gold braid and valor medals. But their swords flashed for the man in the yachting cap and a great general saw him into his car, for the stoutish visitor was the President of the French Republic. Generals Pétain and Pershing accompanied Poincaré in his car up to the drill ground. It was an American division which marched this morning. In fact it was the same unit which had marched through the streets of the port only a few months before. They had grown browner and straighter since that day and they looked taller. Group consciousness had dawned in

them now. The only lack of discipline was shown by the mules. It must be admitted that the mule morale left much to be desired. Many were new to the task of dragging machine guns and those that did not sulk tried to run away. Strong arms and stronger words prevailed upon them.

“Remember,” the driver would plead, “you have a part in making the world safe for democracy,” and in a trice all the evil would flee from the eyes and the heels of the unruly animals.

A number of bands helped to keep the men swinging into the face of a driving rain. The French officers who accompanied Pétain and Poincaré were somewhat surprised when one regiment went by to the tune of “Tannenbaum,” but General Pershing explained that it had been played in America for years under the name of “Maryland, My Maryland.” He had a harder task some minutes later when a band struck up a regimental hymn called “Happy Heinie,” which borrows largely from “Die Wacht am Rhein” for its chorus.

As soon as the troops marched by, General

Pershing sent orders for all the officers to assemble. They gathered in a great half circle before the French President who spoke to them slowly and with much earnestness. Indeed, he spoke so slowly that fair scholars could follow his discourse. Even those who could grasp no more than such words as "Lafayette" and "President Wilson" and "la guerre" listened with apparent interest. M. Poincaré called attention to the fact that the day was the anniversary of the Battle of the Marne and also the birthday of Lafayette. These days, he said, linked together the two nations which were making a common cause in the struggle for civilization and he ended with a dramatic sweep of his arm as he exclaimed, "Long live the free United States." However, he called it *Les Etats Unis* which made it more difficult.

"What did he say?" a group of doughboys asked a sergeant chauffeur who had been stationed near enough to hear the speech. "I didn't get it all," said the sergeant, "but it sounded a good deal like 'give 'em hell.' "

The President and his party spent the rest

of the afternoon inspecting the billets of the Americans. In one barn Poincaré insisted on climbing up a ladder to see the quarters at close range and as he climbed slowly and clumsily it came to my mind that the presidential waist line, the knickerbockers and the yachting cap were all symbols of the fact that France even in war was still a civil democracy.

Still it must be admitted that the next civilian we saw was more warlike than any of the soldiers. The only military equipment worn by Georges Clemenceau was a pair of leather puttees which didn't quite fit, but he had eyes and eyebrows and a jaw which all combined to suggest pugnacity. He was not then premier and indeed he had been in political retirement for some time, but he made a greater impression on the soldiers than any of our visitors because he spoke in English. It was on September 16, 1917, that Clemenceau saw American soldiers, but he had seen them once before and that was in Richmond in 1864 when Grant marched into the city. Clemenceau was then a school teacher in America. The old Frenchman watched the sons and grand-

sons of those dead and gone fighters and expressed the wish that he might see American troops once again when they marched into Berlin.

The doughboys he saw in France were not the seasoned troops which swung by him on those dusty Virginia roads so many years ago, but in their hands were new weapons which might have turned the tide at Bull Run and changed Gettysburg from victory into a rout. Certainly Pickett would have never swept up to the Union lines if there had been machine guns such as those with which the rookies blistered the targets for the edification of the distinguished guests and the bombs which sent the pebbles sky high might have given pause even to Stonewall Jackson.

There were sports as well as military exercises in the program arranged for Clemenceau. There were footraces and a tug of war and boxing matches. In one of these American blood was freely shed on French soil for a middleweight against whom the tide of battle was turning butted his opponent and cut his forehead.

I did not see Joffre when he paid a visit to the army zone and reviewed the troops but he left a glamor for us all in our messroom where he had dinner with General Pershing. It was a reporterless dinner so it meant less to us than to Henriette who served the dinner for the two generals. Nothing much had ever happened to Henriette before. She looked like Jeanne d'Arc, but the only voices she ever heard cried, "L'eau chaude, Henriette," or "Hot water" or "Œufs" or "Eggs." And if they were not wanted right away they must be had "toute de suite."

It was Henriette who brushed the boots and cleaned the dishes and swept the floors and every night she waited on peasants and peddlers and reporters. Once she had a major in the reserve corps. He was attached to the quartermaster's department. But on the historic night she stood at the right elbow of General Joffre and the left elbow of General Pershing. I was away at the time and the correspondents were telling me about it before dinner. While we were talking she came into the room with the roast veal and I said, "Hen-

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riette, they tell me that while I was away you waited upon Marshal Joffre and General Pershing."

One of the men at the table made a warning gesture, but it was too late. Henriette put the hot veal down to cool on a side table and pointed to the seat nearest the window. A large man from a press association sat there but she looked through him and saw the hero of the Marne. "Maréchal Joffre là," said Henriette. She turned to a nearer seat and pointing to the shrinking representative of the Chicago *Tribune* explained, "General Pearshing ici."

One of the men rose from the table then and got the veal. Something was said about fried potatoes, but Henriette remained to tell me about the historic dinner. She admitted that she was very nervous at first. That was increased by the fact that General "Pearshing" ate none of his pickled snails. The Maréchal had fifteen. The soup went well, Henriette said, and General Pearshing cheered her up enormously by his conduct with the mutton. The chicken was also a success. After the

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chicken the generals held their glasses in the air and stood up. Henriette noticed that when Maréchal Joffre stood up he was “*gros comme une maison.*”

As he left the room Maréchal Joffre pinched her cheek but the mark was gone before she could show it to the cook. For all that Henriette had something to show that she waited upon generals at the famous dinner. She opened a new locket which she wore around her neck and took out a small piece of gilt paper. She would not let me touch it, but when I looked closely I saw that it had printed upon it “*Romeo and Juliet.*”

“It’s the band off the cigar Pershing smoked at the dinner,” explained one of the correspondents. Henriette put the treasure back in her locket and sighed. “*Je suis très contente,*” she said.

## CHAPTER IX

### LETTERS HOME

THE British army tells a story of a soldier who had been at the front for a year and a half without ever once writing home. This state of affairs was called to the attention of his officer who summoned the soldier and asked him if he had no relatives. The Tommy admitted that he had a mother and an aunt.

“I want you to go back to quarters,” said the captain, “and stay there until you’ve written a letter. Then bring it to me.”

The soldier was gone for two hours and then he returned and handed the officer a single sheet of letter paper. His note read, “Dear Ma—This war is a blighter. Tell auntie. With love—Alfred.”

It was different in the American army. The doughboys wrote to their families to the second and third cousin. One soldier turned fifty-two letters over to his lieutenant for cen-

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sorship in a single day. The men hardly seemed to need the suggestion posted on the wall of every Y. M. C. A. hut: "Remember to write to mother today." Of course it was not always mother. I came upon a couple of lieutenants one afternoon hard at work on an enormous batch of letters. It was originally intended that the chaplain should censor all the mail for the regiment but it was found that the task would be far beyond the powers of any one man. In time the job came to absorb a large part of the energy of the junior officers.

"This," said one of the officers, "is the fifth soldier who's written that 'our officers are brave, intelligent and kind!' I know I'm brave and intelligent, but I'm not so damned kind," and he ripped out half a page of over faithful description of the country.

"The man I have here," said the second officer, "has got a joke. He says, 'If I ever get home the Statue of Liberty will have to turn round if she ever wants to see me again.' It was all right the first time, but now I've got to his tenth letter and he's still using it."

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It has been found that more than fifty per cent. of the mail sent home consists of love letters. The fact that they have to be censored does not cramp the style of the writers in the least. One letter was so ardent as to arouse admiration. "This man writes the best love letter I ever read," said a lieutenant, looking up. "The only trouble is that he's writing to five girls at once and he uses the same model every time. Two of the girls live in the same town at that."

Most of the letters were cheerful. Some courageously so. One man who was near death from tuberculosis wrote home once a day recounting imaginary events which had happened outside the walls of his hospital. In his letters he would send himself on long marches over the hills of France and describe the woods and meadows and plowed fields as they looked to him on bright mornings. He described in detail work which he was doing in bombing and the only complaint he ever made was on a day when he had coughed himself to such weakness that he could hardly finish his daily letter. He wrote to his mother

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then and asked her to excuse the briefness of his note. He explained that he was pretty well fagged out from a long afternoon of bayonet drill.

The soldiers frequently commented on the kindness of the French people and they were also fond of boasting, with perhaps doubtful justification, that they were already proficient in the French language. A few were desirous of giving the folk back home a thrill. One man working as company cook at a port in France, some three or four hundred miles from the firing line, wrote a weekly letter describing all sorts of war activities. He made up air raids and heavy bombardments and fairly tore up the village in which he was living. Curiously enough he never made himself conspicuous in these actions. According to the letters he was just there with the rest taking the "strafing" as best he could.

The officer who censored his first warlike letter cut out all the imaginative flights, but two days later the soldier wrote another letter even more thrilling. He complained that it

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was difficult to write because the explosion of big shells nearby made the house rock.

The lieutenant called him up then and said, "You're writing a lot of lies home, aren't you?"

"Yes, sir," said the soldier.

"Well, what are you doing it for?" continued the officer.

The soldier shifted about in embarrassment and then he said, "Well, you see, sir, those letters are to my father. He went into the Union army when he was sixteen and fought all through the last two years of the war. He lives in a little town in Ohio and the people there call him 'Fighting Bill' on account of what he did in the Civil War. Well, when I went away to this war he began to go round town and tell everybody that I was going to do fighting that would make 'em all forget about the Civil War. He used to say that I came of fighting stock and that I'd make 'em sit up and take notice. It would be pretty tough for him, sir, if I had to write home and say that I was cooking down in a town where you can't even hear the guns."

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“That’s all right,” said the lieutenant, “but some of the people who’ve got sons in this regiment will be doing a lot of worrying long before they have any need to.”

“No, sir,” said the soldier, “my father don’t know what regiment I’m with. I was transferred when I got over here and the only address he’s got is the military post office number.”

“I don’t know what to say in that case,” replied the lieutenant. “It’s a cinch you’re not giving away any military information and I can’t see how you’re giving any aid and comfort to the enemy. I guess you can go on with that battle stuff. Make the bombardments just as hard as you like, but keep the casualties light.”

In contrast to the attitude of the veteran back in Ohio was a letter which a captain received from the mother of one of his men.

“My son is only nineteen,” she wrote. “He has never been away from home before and it breaks my heart that he should be in France. It may sound foolish but I want to ask you a favor. When he was a little boy I used to

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let him come into the kitchen and bake himself little cakes. I think he would remember some of that still. Can't you use him in the bakery or the kitchen or some place so he won't have to be put in the firing line or in the trenches? I will pray for you, captain, and I pray to God we may have peace for all the world soon."

The captain read the letter and then he burned it up. "If the rest of the men in the company heard of that they would jolly the life out of that boy," he said. But he sat down and wrote to the mother, "Your boy is well and I think he is enjoying his work. I cannot promise to do what you ask because your son is one of the best soldiers in my company. We are all in this together and must share the dangers. I pray with you that there may be peace and victory soon."

No complete story of America's part in the war will ever be written until somebody has made a collection and read thousands of the letters home. The doughboy is strangely inarticulate. He can't or he won't tell you how he felt when he first landed in France, or heard

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the big guns or went to the trenches. He is afraid to be caught in a sentimental pose but this fear leaves him when he writes. In his letters he will pose at times. This is not uncommon. Many a man who would never think of saying anything about "saving France" will write about it in rounded sentences. His deepest and frankest thoughts will come out in letters.

Of course the censors stand between these makers of history and posterity. We must wait for our chronicles of the war because of the censor. The newspaper stories about our troops in France on their tremendous errand should ring like the chronicle of an old crusade, but it is hard for the chronicler to bring a tingle when he must write or cable "Richard the deleted hearted."

When a censor wants to kill a story he usually says, "Don't you know that your story may possibly give information to the Germans?" The correspondent then withdraws his story in confusion. Of course what he should answer is, "Very well, that story may give information to the Germans, but it will

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also give information to the Americans and just now that is much more important."

There are certain military reasons for not naming units and not naming individuals, but the war is not being fought by the army alone. If the country is to be enlisted to its fullest capacity it must have names. The national character cannot be changed in a few months or a year. The newspapers have brought us up on names. It is too much to expect that the folk back home can keep up on their toes if the men they know go away into a great silence as soon as they cross the ocean and are not heard of again unless their names appear in casualty lists. We can't do less for our war heroes than we have done for Ty Cobb and Christy Mathewson and Smokey Joe Wood. That is not only for the sake of the people back home, but for those at the front as well. They like to know that people are hearing about them. It is not encouraging to them to receive papers and learn that "certain units have done something." Just as soon as possible they want to see the name of their regiment and of D company and K and F.

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and H. The English name their units after a battle and so must we. And we must have plenty of names. It helped Ty Cobb not a little in the business of being Ty that thousands of columns of newspaper space had built up a tradition behind him. When Joe Wood got in a hole it is more than probable that he realized that he must and would get himself out again because he was "Smokey Joe." We must do as much for private Alexander Brown and corporal James Kelly, and for sergeants and major generals, too. We are not a folk who thrive on reticence. It is true that we like to blow our own horn but it must be remembered that Joshua brought down a great fortress in that manner. The trumpets are needed for America. We cannot fight our best to the sound of muffled drums.

The man abroad who is sending back the stories of the war must deal with the French censor as well as the American, and that reminds us of Pétain's mustache. When the great general came to our camp all the newspaper stories about his visit were sent to the French military censor. All were allowed to

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pass in due course except one. The correspondent concerned went around to find out what was wrong.

“I’m sorry,” said the censor, “but I cannot allow this cable message to go in its present form. You have spoken of General Pétain’s white mustache. I might stretch a point and allow you to say General Pétain’s gray mustache, but I should much prefer to have you say General Pétain’s blonde mustache.”

“Make it green with small purple spots, if you like,” said the correspondent, “but let my story go.”

## CHAPTER X

### MARINES

“THEY tell me,” said a young marine in his best confidential and earnest manner, “that the Kaiser isn’t afraid of the American army, but that he is afraid of the marines.”

The youngster was hazy as to the source of his information, but he never doubted that it was accurate. He felt sure that the Kaiser had heard of the marines. Weren’t they “first to fight”? And if he didn’t fear them yet, he would. At least he would when Company D got into action.

No unit in the American army today has the group consciousness of the marines. It is difficult to understand just how this has happened. Everybody knows that once a regiment, or a division, or even an army, has acquired a tradition, that tradition will live long after every man who established it has gone.

There is, for instance, the Foreign Legion of the French army. Thousands and thousands of men have poured through this organization. Sickness and shrapnel, the exigencies of the service and what not have swept the veterans away again and again, but it is still the Foreign Legion. Some of its new recruits will be negro horseboys who have missed their ships at one of the ports through overprotracted sprees; there will be a gentleman adventurer or two, and a fine collection of assorted ruffians. But in a month each will be a legionary.

I saw an American negro in a village of France who had been a legionary until a wound had stiffened a knee too much to permit him to engage in further service. He was a shambling, shuffling, whining, servile negro, abjectly sure that some kind white gentleman would give him a pair of shoes, or at least a couple of francs. But he had the Croix de Guerre and the Medaille Militaire. He had not cringed while he was a legionary.

The tradition of this organization, however, is based on battle service. The Legion has

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seen all the hardest fighting. The tradition of our marines rests on something else. They have seen service, of course, but it has not been considerable. Their group feeling was at first sheerly defensive. There was a time when the marine was a friend of no one in the service. He was neither soldier nor sailor. Many of the marine officers were men who had been unable to get appointments at West Point or Annapolis, or, having done so, had failed to hold the pace at the academies. And so the spirit of the officers and the men was that they would show the army and the navy of just what stuff a marine was made. And they have. It is true that the army and the navy have ceased long since to look down upon the marine, but the pressure of handicap has been maintained among the marines in France just the same.

It is largely accidental. For instance, when the American troops were first billeted in the training area the marines were placed at the upper end of the triangle miles further from the field of divisional maneuvers than any of their comrades. And so, if

Joffre, or Pétain, or Clemenceau, or Poincaré, or any of the others came to review the first American expeditionary unit, the marines had to march twenty-two miles in a day in addition to the ground which they would cover in the review. Curiously enough, this did not inspire them with a hatred of the reviews, nor did they complain of their lot. They merely took the attitude that a few miles more or less made no difference to a marine.

I remember a story a young officer told me about his first hike with the marines in France. They had eleven miles to do in the morning and as many more in the afternoon, after a brief review. The young officer appeared with a pair of light shoes with a flexible sole.

“Look here,” said the major, “you’d better put on heavier shoes.”

“I think these will suffice, sir,” said the young lieutenant. “You see, they’re modeled on the principle of an Indian moccasin—full freedom for the foot, you know.”

The major grinned. “Come around and see me this evening,” he said, “and tell me what you think of the Indians.” The man with the

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moccasin style shoe did well enough until the company was in sight of the home village. Unfortunately, a halt was called at a point where a brook ran close to the road.

The sight of the cool stream made the lieutenant's feet burn and ache worse than ever. "I had just about made up my mind to turn my men over to the sergeant and limp home, after a crack at the brook," said the lieutenant, "when I heard one of the men say that he was tired. There was an old sergeant on him like a flash. He was one of the oldest men in the regiment. He had never voted the prohibition ticket and rheumatism was only one of his ailments, but he hopped right on the kid who said he was tired. 'Where do you get off to be a marine?' he said. 'Why, we don't call a hike like this marching in the marines. Look here.' And the old fellow did a series of jig steps to show that the march was nothing to him.

"Well," said the young officer, "I didn't turn the men over to the sergeant and I didn't bathe my feet in the brook. I marched in ahead of them. You see, I thought to myself,

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I guess my feet will drop off all right before I get there, but I can't very well stop. After all, I'm a marine."

Even the Germans did their best to make the marines feel that they were troops apart from the others. Only one raid was attempted during the summer and then it was the village of the marines upon which a bomb was dropped. It injured no one and did ever so much to increase the pride of marines, who would remark to less fortunate organizations in the training area: "What do you know about aeroplanes?"

When it came time to dig practice trenches, other regiments were content to put in the better part of the morning and afternoon upon the work, but the marines went to the task of digging in day and night shifts. There was a Sunday upon which Pershing announced that he would inspect the American troops in their billets. Through some mistake or other he arrived in the camp of the marines eight hours behind schedule, but the men were still standing under arms without a sign of weariness when he arrived. Historical tradition

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lent itself to maintaining the morale of the marines, for their village was once the site of a famous Roman camp and one of the men in digging a trench one day came across a segment of green metal that the marines assert roundly was part of a Roman sword. In a year or two it will be sure to be identified as Cæsar's.

The marines were exclusive and original even in the matter of mascots. The doughboys had dogs and cats and a rather mangy lion for pets but no other fighting organization in the world has an anteater. The marines picked Jimmy up at Vera Cruz and he began to prove his worth as a mascot immediately. He was with 'them when the city was taken. Later he stopped off at Hayti and aided in subduing the rebels. He is said to be the only anteater who has been through two campaigns. Army life has broadened Jimmy. He has learned to eathardtack and frogs and corn-beef and pie and beetles and slum and omelettes. As a matter of fact Jimmy will eat almost anything but ants. Of course he wouldn't refuse some tempting morsel simply

because of the presence of ants, but he no longer finds any satisfaction in making an entire meal of the pesky insects. He won't forage for them. Things like hardtack and pie, Jimmy finds, will stand still and give a hungry man a chance. Lack of practice has somewhat impaired the speed of Jimmy and even if he wanted to revert to type it is probable that he could catch nothing but the older and less edible ants. Of course he does not want to go back to an ant diet. He feels that it would be a reflection on the hospitality of his friends the marines.

The marines are equally tactful. In spite of his decline as an entomologist Jimmy remains by courtesy an anteater and is always so termed when exhibited to visitors. He has two tricks. He will squeal if his tail is pulled ever so gently and he will demolish and put out burning cigars or cigarettes. The latter trick is his favorite. He stamps out the glowing tobacco with his forepaws and tears the cigar or cigarette to pieces. The stunt is no longer universally popular. The marine who dropped a hundred franc note by mistake just

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in front of Jimmy says that teaching tricks to anteaters is all foolishness.

However, Jimmy has picked up a few stunts on his own account. It is not thought probable that any marine ever encouraged him in his habit of biting enlisted men of the regular army and reserve officers. There is a belief that Jimmy works on broad general principles, and many marines fear that they will no longer be immune from his teeth if the distinctive forest green of their organization is abandoned for the conventional khaki of the rest of the army.

Some little time before the American troops first went into the trenches, the marines were scattered into small detachments for police duty. Many of them have since been brought together again. There is, of course, a good deal of stuff and nonsense in stories about soldiers saying, "We want to get a crack at them," and all that, but it is literally and exactly true that the marines, both officers and men, were deeply disappointed when they could not go to the front with the others. Their professional pride was hurt.

## MARINES

Still they did not whine, but went about their traditional police work with vigor. I was in a base hospital one day when a doughboy came in all gory about the head. "What happened to you?" a doctor asked. "A marine told me to button up my overcoat," said the doughboy, "and I started to argue with him."

There are not many American army songs yet, but the marines did not wait until the war for theirs. Most of it I have forgotten, but one of the stunning couplets of the chorus is:

If the army or the navy ever gaze on heaven's  
scenes  
They will find the streets are guarded by United  
States Marines.

## CHAPTER XI

### FIELD PIECES AND BIG GUNS

WAR seemed less remote in the artillery camp than in any other section of the American training area for the roar of the guns filled the air every morning and they sounded just as ominous as if they were in earnest. They were firing in the direction of Germany at that, but it was a good many score of miles out of range. Just the same the French were particular about the point. "We always point the guns toward Germany even in practice if we can," said a French instructing officer, "it's just as well to start right."

The camp consisted of a number of brick barracks and the soldiers and officers were well housed. It was located in wild country, though, where it was possible to find ranges up to twelve thousand yards. Scrubby woods covered part of the ranges and the observation-

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points towered up a good deal higher than would be safe at the front. We went through the woods the morning after our arrival and heard a perfect bedlam of fire from the guns. There was the sharp decisive note of the seventy-five which speaks quickly and in anger and the more deliberate boom of the one hundred and fifty-five howitzer. This was a colder note but it was none the less ominous. It had an air of premeditated wrath about it. The shell from the seventy-five might get to its destination first but the one hundred and fifty-five would create more havoc upon arrival. A sentry warned us to take the left hand road at a fork in the woods and presently we came upon one of the observation towers. It was crammed with officers armed with field glasses. Every now and then they would write things on paper. They seemed like so many reporters at a baseball game recording hits and errors. When we got to the top of the tower we found that large maps were part of the equipment as well as field glasses. These were wonderfully accurate maps with every prominent tree and church spire and

house top indicated. The officers were ranging from the maps. The French theory of artillery work was not new to the American officers, but this was almost the first chance they had ever had to work it out for we have no maps in America suitable for ranging.

According to theory the battery should first fire short and then long and then split the bracket and land upon the target or thereabouts. The men had not been working long and they were still a little more proficient in firing short or long than in splitting the bracket. Later the American artillery gave a very good account of itself at the school. The French instructors told one particular battery that they were able to fire the seventy-five faster than it had ever been fired in France before. Perhaps there was just a shade of the over-statement of French politeness in that, but it was without doubt an excellent battery. In the lulls between fire could be heard the drone of aeroplanes for a number of officers were flying to learn the principles of aerial observation in its uses for fire control. Turning around we could also see a large captive bal-

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loon. All the junior officers were allowed to express a preference as to which branch of artillery work they preferred and, although observation is the most dangerous of all, fully seventy-five per cent. of the men indicated it as their choice.

Some American officers in other sections of the training area came to the conclusion in time that we should go to the English for instruction in some of the phases of modern warfare. We did in fact turn to the English finally for bayonet instruction and a certain number of officers thought that the English would also be useful to us in bombing, but I never heard any question raised but that we must continue to go to the French for instruction in field artillery until such time as we had schools of our own.

The difference in language made occasional difficulties of course. "It took us a couple of days to realize that when our instructor spoke of a 'rangerrang' he meant a 'range error,'" said one American officer, "but now we get on famously."

We left the men in the tower with their

maps and their glasses and went down to see the guns. Our guide took us straight in front of the one hundred and fifty-fives while they were firing, which was safe enough as they were tossing their shells high in the air. It was better fun, though, to stand behind these big howitzers, for by fixing your eye on a point well up over the horizon it was possible to see the projectile in flight. The shell did not seem to be moving very fast once it was located. It looked for all the world as if the gunners were batting out flies and this was the baseball which was sailing along.

The French officer who was showing us about said that he could see the projectile as it left the mouth of the gun, but though the rest of us tried, we could see nothing but the flash. Later we stood behind the seventy-fives but since their trajectory is so much lower it is not possible to see the shell which they fire. They seemed to make more noise than the bigger guns. Fortunately it is no longer considered bad form to stick your fingers in your ears when a gun goes off. Most of the officers and men in this particular battery were as

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careful to shut out the sound of the cannon as schoolgirls at a Civil War play. Not only did they stuff their fingers in their ears, but they stood up on their toes to lessen the vibration.

Guns have changed, however, since Civil War days. They are no longer drab. Camouflage has attended to that. The guns we saw were streaked with red and blue and yellow and orange. They were giddy enough to have stood as columns in the Purple Poodle or any of the Greenwich Village restaurants.

Before we left the camp we met Major General Peyton C. March, the new chief of staff, who was then an artillery officer. We agreed that he was an able soldier because he told us that he did not believe in censorship. Regarding one slight phase of the training he bound us to secrecy, but for the rest he said: "You may say anything you like about my camp, good or bad. I believe that free and full reports in the American newspapers are a good thing for our army."

We traveled many miles from the field gun school before we came to the camp of the heavies. This, too, was a French school which

had been partially taken over by the Americans. The work was less interesting here, for the men were not firing the guns yet, but studying their mechanism and going through the motions of putting them in action. Many of the officers attached to the heavies were coast artillerymen and there was a liberal sprinkling of young reserve officers who had come over after a little preliminary training at Fortress Monroe. The General in charge of the camp told us that these new officers would soon be as good as the best because the most important requirement was a technical education and these men had all had college scientific training or its equivalent. Just then they were all at school again cramming with all the available textbooks about French big guns. They did not need to depend on textbooks alone, for the camp contained types of most styles of French artillery.

The pride of the contingent was a monster mounted on railroad trucks. It fired a projectile weighing 1800 pounds. After the French custom, the big howitzer had been hon-

ored by a name. "Mosquito" was painted on the carriage in huge green letters.

"We call her mosquito," explained a French officer, "because she stings."

"Mosquito" had buzzed no less than three hundred times at Verdun, but she had a number of stings left. The Americans detailed with the gun were loud in its praises and asserted that it was the finest weapon in the world. There were other guns, though, which had their partisans. Some swore by "Petite Lulu," a squat howitzer, which could throw a shell high enough to clear Pike's Peak and still have something to spare. There were champions also of "Gaby," a long nosed creature which outranged all the rest. Marcel could talk a little faster than any gun in camp, but her words carried less weight.

All the menial work about the camp was done by German prisoners. I was walking through the camp one day when I saw a little tow-headed soldier sitting at the doorstep of his barracks watching a file of Germans shuffle by. They were men who had started to war

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with guns on their shoulders, but now they carried brooms.

“Do you ever speak to the German prisoners?” I asked the soldier.

“Oh, yes,” said the youngster; “some of them speak English, and they say ‘Hello’ to me and I say ‘Hello’ back to them. I feel sorry for them.”

The little soldier looked at the shabby procession again and then he leaned over to me confidentially and said with great earnestness as if he had made up the phrase on the spot: “You know I have no quarrel with the German people.”

When we got home after our trips to the artillery camps we found an old man in a French uniform eagerly waiting to see us. He told us that he was an American, and more than that, a Californian. His name was George La Messneger and he was sixty-seven years old. He was French by birth and had fought in the Franco-Prussian war, but the next year he went to California and lived in Los Angeles until the outbreak of the great war. Although more than sixty, La Mess-

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neger was accepted by a French recruiting officer and he was in Verdun two weeks after he arrived in France. Three days later he was wounded and when we met him he had added to his adventures by winning a promotion to sous-lieutenant and gaining the croix de guerre and the medaille militaire.

Old George came to be a frequent visitor, but though we urged him on he would never tell us much about the war. He wanted to talk about California.

“I tell the men in my regiment,” George would begin, “that out in Los Angeles we cut alfalfa five times a year, but they won’t believe me.”

Gently we tried to lead George back to the war and his experiences. “How did you get the military medal, lieutenant?” somebody asked.

“Oh, that was at Verdun,” replied the old man.

“It must have been pretty hot up there,” said another correspondent.

“Yes,” said George, and he began to muse. We imagined that he was thinking of those

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hot days in February when all the guns, big and little, were turned loose.

“Yes,” said George, “it was pretty hot,” and we drew our chairs closer. “You know,” continued the old man, “a lot of people will tell you that Los Angeles is hot. Don’t pay any attention to them. I’ve lived there forty years, and I’ve slept with a blanket pretty much all the time. The nights are always cool.”

I had heard George before and I knew that he was gone for the evening now. As I tiptoed out of the room the old soldier in French horizon blue was just warming up to his favorite topic. “San Francisco’s nothing,” said George, dismissing the city with as much scorn as if it had been Berlin or Munich. He talked with such vehemence that all his medals rattled.

“We’re nearer the Panama Canal,” said George, “we’re nearer China and Japan, and as for harbors——”

But just then the door closed.

## CHAPTER XII

### OUR AVIATORS AND A FEW OTHERS

AT first the ace is low. Our young aviators who will be among the most romantic heroes of them all begin humbly on the ground. The American army now has the largest flying field in France for its very own, but during the summer and early autumn many of our men trained in the French schools. There his groundling days try the aviator's dignity. He must hop before he can fly and perhaps "hop" is too dignified a word. When we visited one of the biggest schools, all the new pupils were practicing in a ridiculous clipped wing Bleriot called a penguin. This machine was a ground-hog which scurried over the earth at a speed of twenty or thirty miles an hour. It never left the grass tops and yet it provided a certain amount of excitement for its pilot, or maybe rider would be better.

The favorite trick of the penguin is to turn suddenly in a short half circle and collapse on its side. It takes a good deal of skill to keep it straight and when the aviator has learned that much he is allowed to make a trip in a machine which leaps a little in the air every now and then, only to flop to earth again. Then he is ready to fly a Bleriot, though, of course, his first trips are made as a passenger. Very little time is spent in flying. Staying up in the air is no great trick. It's the coming down which gives the trouble. And so the student is eternally trying landings. He smashes a good many machines and here the French show their keen realization of the mental factor in flying.

“I made a bad landing one day,” an American student named Billy Parker told me, “and smashed my machine up good and proper. I thought I’d killed myself, but they dragged me out from under the junk, picked the pieces of wood and aluminum out of my head, stuffed some cotton into my nose to check the bleeding and in fifteen minutes they had a new machine out and had me up in the air again.”

Parker said he felt a bit queer when he got up in the air again. "I had a sort of feeling that I belonged down on the ground and not up there," he said. "That was peculiar because usually the air feels very stable and friendly. You hate to come down, but this time I was anxious to get back and after circling the field once I came down. My landing was all right, too, and since then I've never had that scared feeling about the air."

The French theory is that the mistake must be corrected immediately. The man who has had a smash-up is apt to get air shy if he has a chance to brood over his mishap for a day or two.

The last test of the preliminary school is a thirty mile flight with three landings. After he has done that the student goes to Pau for his test in acrobatics. The chief stunt set for him here is a vrille. The student is required to put his machine into a spin at a height of about 3500 feet and bring it out again. The trick is not particularly difficult if the man keeps his head, but the tendency is to turn on the power which only accelerates the fall and some are

killed at Pau. My friend caught malaria as soon as he got there and was allowed to take things easily for a week. Finally his test was set for Wednesday. On Monday morning the man who slept in the cot to his left went out for his test and was killed and on Tuesday the man from the right hand cot was killed. Death came very close to the young American. He and a French student arrived at the training ground at about the same time. Two machines were ready. The instructor hesitated a second and then assigned the American to the machine at the right. A few minutes later the Frenchman was killed when a wing came off his machine as soon as he began his vrinne. Fortunately Parker did not know that until after he had passed his own test. He saw one other man killed before he left Pau and that horrified him more than the accident on the morning of his trial.

“The judge who decided whether you passed your test was a little Frenchman with a monocle,” he said. “He sat in a rocking chair at the edge of the field and you had to do the vrinne straight in front of him or it didn’t count.

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He simply wouldn't turn to look at a flyer. I was standing beside him when one fellow got rattled in the middle of a vrille and put his power on. Even at that he almost lifted his machine out but she came down too fast for him. There was a big smash-up and people came running out to the wreck. They sent for a doctor and then for a priest, but the terrible little man never moved from his chair. 'You see,' he cried to me, 'he was stupid! stupid!' This flying test had come to seem nothing more than an examination bluebook to him. A fellow passed or he flunked and that was all there was to it."

Luck plays its biggest part in a flier's early days at the front. He has a lot to learn after he gets there, but the French do not nurse him along much. He has to take his chances. It may be that he will get in some very tight place before he has learned the fine points and a future star will be lost at the outset of his career. On the other hand he may come up against German fliers as green as himself and gradually gain a technique before he is called upon to face an enemy ace or a superior com-

bination of planes. At the front as in the schools the French pay keen attention to the mental state of the fliers.

“There was always champagne at mess and they kept the graphophone playing all through dinner any night a man from our squadron didn’t come back,” an aviator said to me. “One afternoon we lost two men and before dinner they took a leaf out of the table. Our commander didn’t want us to notice any empty seats or the extra space.”

It is difficult to say which nation has the most daring aviators, but that honor probably belongs to the English. I asked a Frenchman about it and he said: “The English do most of the things you would call stunts. There was one, for instance, that made a landing on a German aviation field and after firing a few rounds at the aerodrome flew away again. That was a stunt. But we think the English are fools with their sportsmanship and all that. It doesn’t work now. We look at it a little differently. We cannot take fool chances. If you take a fool chance you are very likely to get killed. That is not nice, of

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course. We do not like to be killed, but more than that, it is one less man for France. We must wait until there is a fair show."

"And when is that?" I asked.

"When there are not more than four Germans against you," said the careful Frenchman.

The warlike spirit of the French aviators extended even to the servants at the preliminary school which we visited. The Americans there were all quartered in one big room and their general man of all work was a little Annamite from French-Indo-China. Hy seemed the most peaceful member of a peace-loving race as he moved about the barracks just before dawn every morning waking up the students with a smiling "Bon jour" and an equally good-natured "Café." One day he had a holiday and after borrowing a uniform he went to a photographer's in the nearest town. From the photographer he borrowed a rifle, a cutlass and a pistol. He thrust the cutlass into his belt and shouldered the other two weapons. After he had assumed a fighting face the picture was taken.

The next day Hy varied the routine. He began with "Bon jour" as usual, but before he said "Café" he drew from behind his back the photograph, and pointing to it proudly, exclaimed, "brave soldat."

We went from the French school to the big field where the American camp was under construction. The bulk of the work was being done by German prisoners. One of these, a sergeant, had been a well known architect in Munich. The American workers consulted him now and then in regard to some building problem and he always gave them good advice. He took almost a professional pride in the growing buildings even if they were designed to house the men who will one day be the eyes of the American army. We asked another prisoner how he got along with the Americans and he replied: "Oh, some of them aren't half bad." A third spoke to us in meager broken English, although he said that he had lived five years in Buffalo. "Are you going back to Germany after the war?" we asked him. "Nein," he replied decisively, "Chicago."

Most prisoners professed to be confident

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that Germany would win the war and they all based their faith on the submarine. As we started to go the man from Buffalo suddenly held out his hand and said: "So long." Several of the correspondents shook hands with him much to the horror of a young American in the French flying corps who accompanied us.

"You mustn't do that," he explained. "Any Frenchman who saw you do that would be very much shocked."

I remembered then that when I saw German prisoners in any of the large towns the French inhabitants took great pains to ignore them. I never heard French people jeer at their prisoners. Their attitude was one of complete aloofness. Once I saw prisoners in a big railroad station and the crowds swept by on either side without a glance as if these men from Prussia had been so many trunks or trucks or benches.

If the young Americans at the school had not been so busy learning the business of flying they could have formed a crackerjack nine

or eight or eleven, as the squad included some of the most famous of our college athletes.

We also visited an English aerodrome which was not far from our headquarters. This was a camp from which planes started for raids into Germany. The men who were carrying on this work were all youngsters. I saw no one who seemed to be more than twenty-five. Just the day before we arrived the Germans had discovered their whereabouts and had raided the hangars. One man had been killed and two planes wrecked. Machine gun bullets had left holes in all the buildings about the place. The English officer smiled when we looked about. "Oh, yes," he said, "the Hun was over last night and gave us a bit of a bounce." His slang was fluent but puzzling. He was explaining why he and his fellow aviators flew at a certain height on raids. "You see," he said, "the Hun can't get his hate up as far as that."

The bombing machines of the squadron were huge, powerful planes, but they all had pet names painted upon them such as "Bessie" and "Baby" and "Winifred" which had been twice to Stuttgart. These English fliers were a

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quiet, reticent crowd who became fearfully embarrassed if anybody tried to draw them out on the subject of their exploits. One of them went over to an American Red Cross hospital nearby a few days after our visit and played bridge with three American doctors there. He had been a rather frequent visitor and a keen and eager player, so they were somewhat surprised when he told them at nine o'clock that he would have to go. He was three francs behind and started to fumble around in his pockets to find the change. "Oh, never mind," said one of the doctors. "Some other night will do. You'll be over here again pretty soon, I hope."

"Oh, no," said the young Englishman, "I'd rather pay up now. Sorry to toddle off so early. Beastly nuisance, you know, but I've got to go over and bomb Metz to-night."

Much more would be heard of the flying exploits of the English if their individual reticence were not combined with a governmental policy of not announcing the names of the fliers who bring down enemy planes. Unfortunately, the American army seems prepared

to follow this example. One of the high officers in the American air service in France said that he did not intend to treat aviators like *prima donnas*. He added that he thought it was a big mistake to advertise aces. However, the Germans play up their star airmen in the newspapers and on the moving picture screen and it must be admitted that they have not made many mistakes from a purely military point of view.

Inevitably, however, the status of the flier is changing. Nobody regrets this more than the aviators of France. The French army used to have a saying, "all aviators are a little crazy," and nobody believed it so thoroughly as the aviators. They took great pride in being unlike other people in a war which was all cramped up into schedule. An aviator got up when he felt like it and flew when the mood was on. If he felt depressed, or unlucky, or out of sorts, he rolled over and went to sleep again. Nobody said anything about it. When he fought the battle was a duel with an opponent who was also a knight and sportsman although a Boche.

But there was no keeping efficiency out of the air. The German brought it there. He discovered that two planes were better than one and three even better. He introduced teamwork and the lone French errants of the air began to be picked off by groups of Germans who would send one machine after another diving down on a single foe. The Flying Circus and other aerial teams of the Germans have not only driven chivalry from the air, but they have taken a good deal of the joy out of flying. Very reluctantly the French have adopted squadron flying and the airman now finds himself obeying commands just as if he were an infantryman or an artillerist. Even the civilian population has begun to show that it realized the change in the status of the aviator. There was, for instance, poor Navarre, the finest flier in the army, who was sent to prison because he came to Paris on a spree and ran down three gendarmes with his racing auto. French aviators cannot see the sense of punishing Navarre. I only heard one aviator who had any excuse to offer for the civilian authorities.

“After all,” he said, “they showed a little judgment. They did not arrest Navarre until he had run down three gendarmes.”

Although many men in the army have longer lists of fallen Germans to their credit, no Frenchman has ever flown with the grace and skill of Navarre. The great Guynemer was only a fair flier and owed his success to his skill as a gunner. But Navarre was master of all the tricks. Upon one occasion he bet a companion that he could make a landing on an army blanket. The blanket was duly fastened in the middle of the field and away flew the aviator. His preliminary calculation was just a bit off and at the last minute he nosed sharply down and wrecked the machine. But he hit the blanket and won the bet.

Next to Germany, America has done most to take romance out of the air, so the Frenchmen say. The American air student attends lectures and learns about meteorology and physics. He learns how to take a motor apart and put it together again. In fact, he is versed in all the theory of flying long before he is allowed to venture in the air. Of course this is

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the best system. It would be the system of any nation which had the opportunity of taking its time, yet the scholarly approach cannot fail to dim adventure a little bit. Launce-  
lot would have been a somewhat less dashing knight if he had begun his training in chivalry by learning the minimum number of foot pounds necessary to unhorse an opponent or the relative resilience of chain mail and armor.

Yet not all the training in the world can take the stunt spirit out of the young American aviator. One who shipped as a passenger with a Frenchman bound for a bombing raid, paid for his passage by crawling out along the fuselage of the machine to release a bomb which had stuck. But it was a little incident back of the lines which gave me the best insight into the character of the American aviator. I know a young aviator of twenty-five who is already a major and the commander of a squadron. He wasn't particularly old for his years, either. I remember he told us with great glee how he and another young aviation officer had nailed the purser in his cabin one night during the trip across. Yet he could be stern upon oc-

casion. He was walking along the field one day when he saw a plane looping. He was surprised because the French instructor attached to the squadron had told them that the type of machine which they were using would not do the loop the loop. It didn't have sufficient power, he said, nor would it stand the strain.

"It made five loops," said the major in telling the story, "and they were dandies, too, as good as I ever saw. I thought it was the Frenchman, of course, but I asked somebody and he said, 'No, it's Harry.' When he came down I bawled him out. 'You were told not to do that, weren't you?' I asked him. He said, 'Yes, sir.' 'Well, what did you do it for?' I asked him. 'I guess it was because the Frenchman told me it was impossible,' he said. I told him that he would have to turn his machine over to another man and that other disciplinary measures would be applied. He's in disgrace still and I suppose I've got to keep it up for a while. That's all right, good discipline and all that sort of thing, you know, but there's one thing I can't take away from him, and no-

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body else can. He's the only man in France that ever looped that type of machine. He did it. By golly, I envy him, but I don't dare let him know it."

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOSPITALS AND ENGINEERS

SOME of the compliments the mannerly French poured out upon the army left the Americans feeling that they didn't quite deserve them. Others they could take standing. Well to the front of the second lot were all the good words for the medical corps. A leading writer for a big Parisian afternoon paper took the first three columns of his first page to say with undisguised emotion that the French government not merely could, with profit, but should and must pattern after the American Army Medical Service.

One good army hospital in France is like another and so let it be the New York Post Graduate unit which was picked at random for the purpose of a visit. We straggled off the train with two old peasant women whose absorbed faces under their peaked white caps

did not encourage us to ask our way of them, and one poilu, bent under the astonishing miscellany of the home-going French soldier. He lost his chance to escape us by eyeing us with frank if friendly curiosity. Could he direct us to the American Army Hospital, we asked, and he wrinkled his weather worn nose. No, he hadn't been home since the Americans had come to war, but, of course, there was only one building in town big enough and new enough to be used by the Americans. If we should turn to the left and then to the right and then to the left again we would come to the school and there he thought we would find the Americans. We did. To the far end of the little town we trudged till we came to a low stone building, gray and white, of good stout masonry. We knew it was the American hospital because over the arched entrance there hung a "bannière étoilée."

We neared the entrance to the tune of some trumpet blasts, not very well played, and we peered from arch to inner court yard just in time to see a swarm of khaki-half-clad soldiers running out from barracks. By the time they

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reached the mess door they were khaki-clad. The officer who came to take us about explained that on Sunday mornings everybody slept late and dressed on the way to breakfast and that discipline was better on week days. Then he told us that of all the privates in that unit not one had ever been a soldier before. They had been picked for medical service first and military service at such time as the officers had learned enough to teach it to them. I remember later that one of the soldiers objected privately to being drilled by a dentist.

Nine-tenths of the men were fresh out of college, the officer told us, and half the other tenth were freshmen or sophomores. Many of the enlisted men, we were told, had left incomes in the tens of thousands and a few in the hundreds of thousands. The enlisted personnel included one matinée idol, one young New York dramatic critic, two middling well known young authors, a composer of good but saleable music, and a golfer who gets two in the national rating.

The wards were not very different from

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those of a New York hospital back home, except that they housed a strange mixture of patients. About half were American soldiers and the rest were civilians from the country round about. The French civilians were convinced that though the American doctors might cure them with their marvelous medicines and speckless cleanliness they would surely kill them with air. This particular base hospital was fulfilling two functions for the civilian population. It was seeking to take out adenoids and let in air. A great New York specialist was attending to the adenoids and making progress. It was not always possible to convince the patient that it would do him any good to have his adenoids removed, but if the operation gave the kind American doctor any pleasure he was willing to let him go ahead. The air campaign was making slower progress. Dislike of air is centuries old in France and it has become an instinct with the race. I rode in a railroad car with a French aviator on a balmy day of early autumn and his first act upon entering the compartment was to close both windows.

Everybody in this part of France has his bed placed inside a closet and at night he closes the doors.

Worst of all were the extra precautions against air which the French peasants took in case of illness. The young French doctors were at the front and the old men who remained always began the treatment of a case by advising the patient's relatives to close all the windows and start a fire.

At the call of sick babies and old folk of the countryside came aristocrats of the New York medical profession whose fees at home would have bought the house in which the patient lived. Later, of course, the doctors of the hospital will be more rushed by the necessities of the soldiers.

“This is hardly more than a germ of what we plan,” a doctor explained to us. “Do you see those tents?” He pointed across a small field. “Those are American engineers and they’re going to do nothing for the next few months but build additions to this hospital. Every time I go ‘way for a day I come back to find that they’ve added a thousand beds to

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the capacity we're planning for. We will extend all the way across the fields over to that road before they're done with us." He spoke in a joyful voice as if nothing in the world was quite so inspiring as a huge hospital filled with patients. That was the professional touch. I remember the story one of the doctors told us about a young surgeon who was sent up to the French front to help handle the cases after a big drive. One of his first patients was a German prisoner who had been shot just above the elbow and bayoneted in the stomach. The doctor had no great trouble with the elbow and he did what he could for the abdominal wound.

"I could save that man all right if it wasn't for that bayonet wound," he said to another American doctor close at hand, and then he added in a reproachful voice as he pointed to the gash: "That's an awful dangerous place to stab a man."

There were no wounded at the hospital at the time of our visit, but some of the soldiers in the medical ward were very sick. There was one boy there, who has since mended and gone away, whose recovery seemed hopeless. The

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doctor in charge saw that something was troubling the young soldier and so he came to him and told him that he was aggravating his illness by this worry or desire.

“Whatever this thing is, you must tell me,” said the doctor.

“Do you think I’m going to die?” the boy asked anxiously.

“Oh, I wouldn’t say that,” the doctor answered a little evasively.

“I knew I was pretty sick,” said the boy, catching the evasiveness of the doctor’s tone, “and if you think I’m going to die and won’t ever get back home again, there’s just one thing I want to ask you to do for me.”

“What’s that?” said the doctor.

“Couldn’t you fix it up for me just once to have ham and eggs and apple pie for breakfast?”

The most important thing in the case of all the sick men was to keep them from brooding about home. The doctors made a point of getting around and talking to the patients to cheer them up. One of them complained of homesickness.

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“Yes,” said the doctor, “I suppose we all have people back there that we miss.”

“You can just bet I do,” said the sick soldier, “I’ve got the finest wife in the world in Des Moines and two children and a Ford.”

The health of the staff was excellent, but sometimes they felt homesick, too. The enlisted men gave a show the night I was at the hospital and during the course of the performance everybody wept or at least got moist eyed because the play was about New York. It was laid in a year as nameless as the place where the hospital is located. All the program said was: “The bachelor apartments of Schuyler Van Allen on a fine June night a few weeks after the end of the war.” Schuyler had just come back from Europe and he found his apartment with everything just as it was on the night he had sailed for France. There was the daily paper he had left behind with the date May 3, 1917, and he looked at the old sheet and mused as he read some of the headlines:

“Kaiser Calls on Troops to Stand Firm,” read Schuyler. “The Kaiser,” he said to him-

self, and then he added: "I wonder whatever became of him."

The audience laughed at that, but in a moment the doctors and the nurses and the patients who weren't sick enough to stay in bed wept. It was all because Schuyler looked out of the window and said to his friend: "Oh, it's great to be on Fifth Avenue again. I want to see it in every light and at every hour of the day. It was fairly blazing tonight with the same old hurrying crowd jamming the traffic at Forty-second Street and the same old mob pushing and shoving its way into the Grand Central subway station." The mention of the subway was too much for the audience. By this time the nurse who sat in front of me was dabbing violently at her eyes with her pocket handkerchief. She was breaking my heart and I leaned forward and asked: "What part of New York do you come from?"

"I wasn't ever in New York," she said. "I come from Lima, Ohio."

Like the medical corps, the engineers were peculiarly American and peculiarly efficient as well. We first came upon them when we

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saw a tall, stringy man looking out of the window of a little locomotive which pulled a train up to a point at the French front. We thought he was an American because his jaws were moving back and forth slowly and meditatively. Inquiry brought confirmation.

“Sure, I’m an American,” said the man in the blue jumpers. “I guess I’ve kicked a hobo off the train for every telegraph pole back on the old Rock Island, but this is the toughest railroading job I’ve struck yet.”

The man in the locomotive was a member of an American regiment of railroad engineers which had taken over an important military road. They had the honor to be the first American troops at the French front who came under fire. The engineers were willing to admit that while washouts and spreading rails were old stories to them, they did get a bit of a thrill the first time they found their tracks torn up by shellfire. But the aeroplanes were worse.

“One night,” said our friend the engineer, “there was one of those flying machines just followed along with us and every time we fired

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the engine and the sparks flew up she'd drop a bomb on us or shoot at us with her machine gun. We tried to hit it up a bit, but she kept right up with us. They didn't hit us, but once they got so rough we just slowed down and laid under the engine for a spell until they decided to quit picking on us."

This regiment of railroad engineers was the huskiest outfit I saw in France. It was carefully selected from the railroads running into Chicago. Of the men originally selected only about one-seventh were taken because the railroads found so many men who were eager to go. One company boasted one hundred and twenty-five six-footers and all were two-fisted fighters. The discipline of the regiment, of course, was not that of an infantry unit. I watched an animated discussion between a captain and his men as to where some material should be placed when the regiment first moved into a new camp.

"You've got the wrong dope about that, Bill," said a private to his captain very earnestly. The officer looked at him severely.

"I've told you before about this discipline

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business, Harry," he said. "Any time you want to kick about my orders you call me mister." It is hard for a railroad man to realize that a couple of silver bars have changed a yardmaster into a captain.

The regiment set great store by the number thirteen. It was put into service on a Friday the thirteenth and it left its American base in two sections of thirteen cars each. The locomotives' headlight numbers each totaled thirteen and the thirteenth of a month found the regiment arriving at its European port of entry. The thirteenth of the next month found the regiment starting for its French base and when the camp was reached a group of interpreters was waiting.

"How many are you?" asked the colonel.

"Myself and twelve companions," replied one of the Frenchmen.

The regiment will never forget the first night at its French base. It arrived at midnight but crowds thronged the darkened streets and gave the big Americans an enthusiastic greeting, although it was forbidden to talk above undertones. Since they could not hur-

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rah for the soldiers, the villagers hugged them, and from black windows roses were pelted on shadowy figures who tramped up the street to the low rumble of a muffled band.

“Great people, these French, so demonstrative,” said a captain, who was once a train-master in a Texas town.

“I was in the theater the other night,” he said, “and a couple of performers on the stage started to sing ‘Madelon.’ Well, I’d heard it before and I knew the chorus, so when they got that far along I joined in. Well, there was a young girl sitting next me and when she saw that I knew the song she just threw her arms around my neck and kissed me.

“And now,” said the captain, “everybody in the regiment’s after me to teach ‘em that song.”

## CHAPTER XIV

### WE VISIT THE FRENCH ARMY

“THE Germans haven’t thrown a single shell into Rheims today,” said our conducting officer apologetically. “Yesterday,” he continued more cheerfully, “they sent more than five hundred big ones and they wounded two of my officers.”

We left the little inn at the fringe of the town and rode into the square in front of the cathedral. At the door the officer turned us over to the curator. The old man led us up the aisle to a point not far from the altar. Here he stopped, and pointing to a great shell hole in the floor said: “On this spot in the year 496 Clovis, the King of the Franks, was baptized by the blessed St. Remi with oil which was brought from heaven in a holy flask by a dove.”

Something flew over the cathedral just then, but we knew it was not a dove. It whis-

tled like a strong wind, and presently the shop of a confectioner some ten blocks away folded up with a ripping, smashing sound. Clovis, with his fourteen centuries wrapped about him, was safe enough. He had quit the spot in time. But a younger man ducked. The old guide did not even look up.

“The first stone of the present cathedral was laid in May, 1212, by the Archbishop Alberic de Humbert,” he said.

Another big shell tore the sky, and this time the smash was nearer. It seemed certainly no more than nine blocks away. The young man began to calculate. He figured that he was seven centuries down, while the Germans had nine blocks to go. That was something, but the guide failed to keep up his pace through the centuries. There were no more happy hiatuses.

“Scholars dispute,” he continued, “as to who was the architect of the cathedral. Some say it was designed by Robert de Coucy; others name Bernard de Soissons, but certain authorities hold to Gauthier de Reims and Jean d’Orbais.” Two more shells crossed the cathe-

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dral. The controversy seemed regrettable and the young man shifted constantly from foot to foot. He appeared to feel that there was less chance of being hit if he were on the wing, so to speak.

“One or two have named Jean Loups,” said the guide, but he shook his head even as he mentioned him. It was evident that he had no patience with Loups or his backers. Indeed, the heresy threw him off his stride, and the next smash which came during the lull was more significant than any of the others. The crash was the peculiarly disagreeable one which occurs when a large shell strikes a small hardware store. Even the guide noticed this shell. It reminded him of the war.

“Since April,” he said, “the Germans have been bombarding Rheims with naval guns. All the shells which they fire now are .320 or larger. They fire about 150 shells a day at the city, mostly in the afternoon, and they usually aim at the cathedral or some place nearby.”

The young man noted by his watch that it was just half-past one.

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“A week ago the Germans fired a .320 shell through the roof, but it did not explode. I will show it to you, but first I must ask you to touch nothing, not even a piece of glass, for we want to put everything back again that we can after the war.”

On the floor there was evidence that some patient hand had made a beginning of seeking to fit together in proper sequence all the available tiny glass fragments from the shattered rose windows. It was a pitiful jigsaw puzzle, which would not work. The curator stepped briskly up the nave, and at the end of a hundred paces he stopped.

“This is the most dangerous portion of the cathedral,” he explained. “Most of the big shells have come in here.” And he pointed to three great holes in the ceiling. Then he showed us the monstrous shell which had not exploded and the fragments of others which had. Down toward the west end of town fresh fragments were being made. Each hole in the cathedral roof sounded a different note as the shells raced overhead. But the old curator was musing again. He had forgotten the war, even

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though the smashed and twisted bits of iron and stone from yesterday's clean hit lay at his feet.

“The first stone of the present cathedral was laid in May, 1212, by the Archbishop Alberic de Humbert,” he said. “Alberic gave all the money he could gather and the chapter presented its treasury, and all about the clergy appealed for funds in the name of God. Kings of France and mighty lords made contributions, and each year there was a great pilgrimage, headed by the image of the Blessed Virgin, through all the villages. And the building grew and sculptors from all parts of France came and embellished it and in 1430 it was finished. You see, gentlemen,” he said, “it took more than two hundred years to build our cathedral.”

We left the cathedral then and paused for a minute in the square before the statue of Jeanne d'Arc, who brought her king to Rheims and had him crowned. In some parts of France devout persons speak of the Jeanne statue in Rheims as a miracle because, although the cathedral has been scarred and shat-

tered and every building round the square badly damaged, the statue of Jeanne is untouched. I looked closely and found the miracle was not perfect. A tiny bit of the scabbard of Jeanne had been snipped off by a flying shrapnel fragment, but the sword of Jeanne, which is raised high above her head, has not a nick in it.

Crossing the square we went into the office of *L'Eclaireur de l'Est*. This daily newspaper has no humorous column, no editorials, no sporting page and no dramatic reviews, and yet is probably the most difficult journal in the world to edit. The chief reportorial task of the staff of *L'Eclaireur* is to count the number of shells which fall into the city each day. That doesn't sound hard. The reporter can hear them all from his desk and many he can see, for the cathedral just across the street is still the favorite target of the Germans. Sometimes the reporter does not have to look so far. The office of *L'Eclaireur* has been hit eleven times during the bombardment and three members of the staff have been killed. One big shell fell in the composing

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room and so now the paper is set by hand. It is a single sheet and the circulation is limited to the three or four thousand civilians, who have stuck to Rheims throughout the bombardment. One of the few who remain is a man who keeps a picture postcard shop in a building next door to the newspaper office. His roof has been knocked down about his head and his business is hardly thriving. I asked him why he remained.

“I started to go away several months ago after one day when they put some gas shells into the town,” he said. “The very next morning I put all my things into a cart and started up that street there. I had gone just about to the third street when a shell hit the house behind me. It killed my horse and wrecked the wagon and so I picked up my things and came back. It seemed to me I wasn’t meant to go away from Rheims.”

The shelling increased in violence before we left the office of *L’Eclaireur*. One shell was certainly not more than a hundred and fifty yards away, but the work went on without interruption. The printers who were setting ads

never looked up. Mostly these advertisements were of houses in Rheims which were renting lower than ever before. If there was anyone in the visiting party who felt uncomfortable he was unwilling to show it, for just outside the door of the newspaper office there sat an old lady with a lapful of fancy work. A shell came from over the hills and, in the seconds while it whistled and then smashed, the old lady threaded her needle.

A day later, when some of us were willing to confess that of all miserable sounds the whistling of a shell was the meanest, we found a curious kink in the brain of everyone. It was the universal experience that the slightest bit of cover, however inadequate, gave a sense of safety out of all proportion to its utility. Thus we all felt much more uncomfortable in the square than when we stood in the composing room of the newspaper which was shielded by the remains of a glass skylight. The same curious psychological twist can be found among soldiers at the front. Again and again men will be found taking apparent comfort in

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the fact that half an inch of tin roof protects them from the shells of the Germans.

One is always taken from the cathedral of Rheims to the wine cellars. The children of darkness are invariably wiser than the children of light and the champagne merchants have not suffered as the churchmen have. Their business places have been knocked about their heads, but their treasures are underground deep enough to defy the biggest shells. In the cellar of a single company which we visited there were 12,000,000 quarts of wine. Even the German invasion at the beginning of the war failed to deplete this stock. Hundreds of people live in these cellars, which are laid out in avenues and streets. We came first to New York, a street with tier upon tier of wine bottles; then to Boston, then to Buenos Ayres, then to Montreal. One of the visitors explained that the street named New York contained the wine destined to be shipped to that city, while Buenos Ayres contained the consignment for the Argentine capital, and so on. We nodded acceptance of the theory, but

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the next wine-laden street was called Carnot and the next was Jeanne d'Arc.

From the cellars we made a journey to a battery of French .75's. It was a peaceful military station, for so well were the guns concealed that they seemed exempt from German fire, in spite of the fact that they had been in place for half a year. The men sat about underground playing cards and reading newspapers, but the commander of the battery was unwilling that we should go with such a peaceful impression of his guns. He brought his men to action with a word or two and sent six shells sailing at the German first line trenches for our benefit. We left, half deafened, but delighted.

No child could be more eager to show a toy than is a French officer to let a visitor see in some small fashion how the war wags. We went from the battery to a first line trench. It was slow work down miles and miles of camouflaged road to the communicating trench, and all along the line we were stopped by kindly Frenchmen, who wanted us to see how their dugouts were decorated or the nature of their

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dining room or the first aid dressing station or any little detail of the war with which they were directly concerned. Much can be done with a dugout when a few back numbers of *La Vie Parisienne* are available. Still, this scheme of decoration may be carried too far. I will never forget the face of a Y. M. C. A. man who joined us at a French officers' mess one day. It was a low ceilinged room, with pine walls, but not an inch of wall was visible, for a complete papering of *La Vie Parisienne* pictures had been provided. Among the ladies thus drafted for decorative purposes there was perhaps chiffon enough to make a single arm brassard.

Trenches, save in the very active sectors, give the visitor a sense of security. Open places are the ones which try the nerves of civilians, and it was pleasant to walk with a wall of earth on either hand, even if some of us did have to stoop a bit. From the point where we entered the communication trench to the front line was probably not more than half a mile as the crow flies—if, indeed, he is foolish enough to travel over trenches—but the sunken

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pathway turned and twisted to such an extent that it must have been two miles before we struck even the third line. Here we were held while ever so many dugouts and kitchens and gas alarm stations and telephones were exhibited for us. They were all included in the routine of war, but of a sudden romance popped up from underground. The conducting officer paused at the entrance of a passage. "Another dugout" we thought.

"Bring them up!" said the officer to a soldier, and the poilu scrambled down the steps and came up with a bird cage containing two birds.

"These are the last resort," explained the officer. "We send messages from the trenches by telephone, if we can. If the wires are destroyed we use flashes from a light, but if that station is also broken and we must have help the birds are freed."

Neither pigeon seemed in the least puffed up over the responsibility which rested upon him.

The German trenches were just 400 yards away from the first lines of the French. It

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was possible to see them by peering over the rim of the trench, but we quickly ducked down again. Presently we grew less cautious, and one or two tried to stare the Germans out of countenance. If they could see that strangers were peeping at them they paid no attention.

The French officer in charge seemed embarrassed. He explained that it was an exceptionally quiet day. Only the day before the Germans had been active with trench mortars, and he couldn't understand why they were sulking now. Possibly the bombardment from the French .75's, which had been going on all day, had softened them a bit. He looked about the trench dejectedly. The soldiers of the front line were playing cards, eating soup or modeling little grotesque figures out of the soft rock which lined the walls of the trenches. He called sharply to a soldier, who fetched a box of rifle grenades out of a cubbyhole and sent half a dozen, one after the other, spinning at the German lines. Probably they fell short, or perhaps the Germans were simply sullen. At any rate, they paid no attention. They

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were not disposed into being prodded to show off for American visitors.

The officer suddenly thought up a method to retrieve the lost reputation of his trench. If we could only stay until dark he would send us all out on a patrolling party right up to the wire in front of the German first line. We declined, and made some little haste to leave this ever so obliging officer. In another moment we feared he would organize an exhibition offensive for our benefit and reserve us places in the first wave.

If things were quiet on the ground there was plenty of activity aloft. It was a clear day, and both sides had big sausage balloons up for observation. Once a German plane tried to attack a French sausage, but it was driven off, and all day long the Germans sought without success to wing the balloon with one of their long range guns. In that particular sector on that particular day the French unquestionably had the mastery of the air. We saw four of their 'planes in the air to every one German, and once a fleet of five cruised over the German lines. The Boche opened on them with

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shrapnel. It was a clear day, without a breath of wind, and the white puffs clung to the sky at the point where they broke. Presently the French planes swooped much lower, and the Germans opened on them with machine guns. Somebody has said that machine gun fire sounds as if a crazy carpenter was shingling a roof, and somebody else has compared the noise to a typewriter being operated in an upper room, but it is still more like a riveting machine. It has a business-like, methodical sound to me. To my ear there is no malice in a machine gun, but then I have never heard it from an aeroplane.

The officer in charge accompanied us to the end of the communicating trench.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

We told him that we were going directly to Paris.

“Have a good time,” he said, “but leave one dinner and one drink for me.”

“You are going to Paris?” we asked.

He looked over toward the German wire and smiled a little. “I may,” he said.

## CHAPTER XV

### VERDUN

FROM the hills around Verdun we saw the earth as it must have looked on perhaps the fourth day of creation week. It was all frowsy mud and slime. Man was down deep in the dust from which he will spring again some day. There was not even a foothold for poppies on the hills around Verdun, for mingled with the old earth scars were fresh ones, and there will be more tomorrow.

The Germans have been pushed back of the edges of the bowl in which Verdun lies, and now their only eyes are aeroplanes. Big naval guns are required to reach the city itself, but the Germans are not content to leave the battered town alone. They bang away at ruins and kick a city which is down. They fire, too, at the citadel, but do no more than scratch the top of this great underground fortress.

Our guide and mentor at Verdun was a dis-

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tinguished colonel, very learned in military tactics and familiar with every phase of the various Verdun campaigns. The extent of his information was borne home to us the first day of the trip, for he stood the party on top of Fort Souville and carried on a technical talk in French for more than half an hour, while German shells, breaking a few hundred yards away, sought in vain to interrupt him.

From the top of Souville it was possible to see gun flashes and to spy, now and again, aeroplanes which darted back and forth all day, but not a soldier of either side was to be seen through the strongest glasses. On no front have men dug in so deeply as at Verdun. They have good reason to snuggle into the earth, for the French have a story that one of their projectiles killed men in a dugout seventy-five feet below the surface. They thought that this terrific penetration must have been due to the fact that the shell hit fairly upon a crack in the concrete and wedged its way through.

Barring plumbing, which is always an after thought in France, the French make the un-

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derground dwellings of the soldiers moderately comfortable. There are ventilating plants and electric lights, and in the citadel a motion picture theater. In one underground stronghold we found the telephone central for all the various positions around Verdun. We wondered whether or not he was ever obliged to report, "Your party doesn't answer."

We traveled far underground, and at last the colonel brought us out again near the high, bare spot where the automobiles had been left. As we walked down the road there was a particularly vicious bang some place to our left.

"That wasn't very far away," said the colonel.

This was the first shell which had stirred him to interest or attention. Presently there came another bang, and this seemed just as loud. The colonel paused thoughtfully.

"Maybe one of their aeroplanes has seen us and spotted us for the artillery," he said. "Tell the chauffeurs to turn the cars around at once, and we'll go."

The chauffeurs turned the cars with com-

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mendable alacrity and the colonel walked slowly toward them. But his roving glance rested for an instant upon a little ridge across the valley to his left which brought memories to his mind and he stopped in the middle of the road and began: "In the Spring of 1915——" On and on he went in his beautiful French and described some small affair which might have influenced the entire subsequent course of events. It seemed that if the Germans had varied their plan a little the French defensive scheme would have been upset and all sorts of things would have happened. At the end of twenty minutes he had done full justice to the subject and then he recollect ed.

"We'd better go now," he said, "the Germans may have spotted us."

We messed with the French officers in the citadel that night and found that they were ready to converse on almost any subject but the war. Literature was their favorite topic. Although the colonel spoke no English, he was familiar with much American literature in translation. Poe he knew well, and he had read a few things of Mark Twain's. Some-

body mentioned William James, and a captain quoted at length from an essay called "A Moral Equivalent for War." The lieutenant on my right wanted to know whether Americans still read Walt Whitman, and I wondered whether the same familiarity with French literature would be encountered in any American mess. This little lieutenant had been a professor or instructor some place or other when the war began and had several poetical dramas in verse to his credit. He had written a play called "Dionysius" in rhymed couplets. At the beginning of the war he had enlisted as a private and had seen much hard service, which had brought him two wounds, a medal and a commission. He hoped ardently to survive the war, for he felt that he could write ever so much better because he had been thrown into close relationship with peasants and laborers. He found their talk meaty, and at times rich in poetry. One day, he remembered, his regiment had marched along a country road in a fine spring dawn. His comrade to the right, a Parisian peddler, remarked as they passed a gleaming forest: "There is a

wood where God has slept." The little lieutenant said that if he had the luck to live through the war he was going to write plays without a thought of the Greeks and their mythology. He hoped, if he should live, to write for the many as well as the few. I wondered to myself just what sort of plays one of our American highbrows would write if he served a campaign with the 69th or drove an army mule.

The French army tries to let the men at the front live a little better than elsewhere if it is possible to get the food up to them. In the citadel at Verdun the men dine in style now that the incoming roads are pretty much immune from shell fire. Our luncheon with the officers on the night of the twenty-fifth of September, for instance, consisted of *hors d'œuvres*, *omelette aux fines herbes*, *bifsteck*, *pommes parmentier*, *confitures*, *dessert*, *café*, *champagne* and *pinard*. And for dinner we had *potage vermicelli*, *œufs bechamel*, *jambon aux épinards*, *chouxfleur au jus*, *duchesse chocolat*, *fruits*, *dessert*, *café* and, of course, *champagne* and *pinard*.

We spent the night in the citadel and a little after midnight the German planes came over. They bombed the town and dropped a few missiles on the citadel, but they did no more than dent the roof a bit. Our rooms were almost fifty meters underground and the bombs sounded little louder than heavy rain on the roof. Certainly they did not disturb the Frenchman just down the hall. His snores were ever so much louder than the German bombs.

On the morning of our second day we crossed the Meuse and drove down heavily camouflaged roads to Charny. Five hundred yards away a French battery was under heavy bombardment from big German guns. We could see the earth fly up from hits close to the gun emplacements. Five hundred yards away men were being killed and wounded, but the soldiers in Charny loafed about and smoked and chatted and paid no attention. This bombardment was not in their lives at all. The men of the battery might have been the folk who walk upside down on the other side of the earth.

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“The last time I came to Charny,” said the Colonel, “I had to get in a dugout and stay five hours because the Germans bombarded it so hard.

“But that was in the afternoon,” he reassured us; “the Germans never bombard Charny in the morning.”

We stood and watched the two sheets of fire poured upon the battery until somebody called attention to the fact that it was almost noon and we returned to the citadel. And at two o'clock that afternoon we stood on a hill-top overlooking the valley and sure enough the Germans were giving Charny its daily strafe. Shells were bursting all around the peaceful road we had traveled in the morning. Probably by now the men in the battery were idling about and taking their ease. After all there is something to be said for a foe who plays a system.

## CHAPTER XVI

### WE VISIT THE BRITISH ARMY

HE was twenty-six and a major, but he was three years old in the big war, and that is the only age which counts today in the British army. The little major was the first man I ever met who professed a genuine enthusiasm for war. It had found him a black sheep in the most remote region of a big British colony and had tossed him into command of himself and of others. Utterly useless in the pursuit of peace, war had proved a sufficiently compelling schoolmaster to induce the study of many complicated mechanical problems, of subtler ones of psychology, not to mention two languages. It is true that his German was limited to "Throw up your hands" and "Come out or we'll bomb you," but he could carry on a friendly and fairly extensive conversation in French. The tuition fee was two wounds.

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He was a fine, fair sample of the slashing, swanking British army which backs its boasts with battalions and makes its light words good with heavy guns. We rode together in a train for several hours on the way to the British front and when I told him I was a newspaper man he was eager to tell me something of what the British army had done, was doing and would do.

“If they’d cut out wire and trenches and machine guns and general staffs,” said the little major, “we’d win in two months.” Without these concessions he did not expect to see the end for at least a year. However, he was concerned for the most part with more concrete things than predictions, and I’d best let him wander on as he did that afternoon with no interruption save an occasional question. He was returning to the front after being wounded. There had been boating and swimming and tennis and “a deuced pretty girl” down there at the resort where he had been recuperating, and yet he was glad to be back.

“You see,” the little major explained, “I have been in all the shows from the beginning

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and I'd feel pretty rotten if they were to pull anything off without me. The C.O. wants me back. I have a letter here from him. He tells me to take all the time I need, but to get back as soon as I can. The C.O. and I have been together from the beginning. It isn't that the new fellow isn't all right. Quite likely he's a better officer than I am, but the C.O. wants the old fellows that he's seen in other shows and knows all about. That's why I want to get back. I want to see what the new fellow's doing with my men."

He limped a little still, and I pressed him to tell me about his wound. It seemed he got it in "the April show."

"There was a bit of luck about that," he said. "I happened to take my Webley with me when we went over, as well as my cane. They've got a silly rule now that officers mustn't carry canes in an attack and that they must wear Tommies' tunics, so the Fritzies can't spot them. They say we lose too many officers because they expose themselves. Nobody pays much attention to that rule. You won't find many officers in Tommies' tunics,

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but you will find 'em out in front with their canes.

"And there's sense to it. I've always said that I wouldn't ask my men to go any place I wasn't willing to go and to go first. 'Come on,' that's what we say in the British army. The Germans drive their men from behind. Some of their officers are very brave, you know, but that's the system. I remember in one show we were stuck at the third line of barbed wire. The guns hadn't touched it, but it wasn't their fault. There was a German officer there, and he stood up on the parapet, and directed the machine gun fire. He'd point every place we were a little thick and then they'd let us have it. We got him, though. I got a machine gunner on him. Just peppered him. He was a mighty brave officer."

I reminded the little major that I wanted to hear about his wound.

"We were coming through a German trench that had been pretty well cleaned out, but close up against the back there was a soldier hiding. When I came by he cut at me with his bayonet. He only got me in the fleshy part of my

leg, and I turned and let him have it with my Webley. Blew the top of his head right off. Silly ass, wasn't he? Must have known he'd be killed."

I asked him if his wound hurt, and he said no, and that he was able to walk back, and felt quite chipper until the last mile.

"The first thing a wounded man wants to do," he explained, "is to get away. If he's been hit he gets a sudden crazy fear that he's going to get it again. Most wounds don't hurt much, and as soon as a man's out of fire and puts a cigarette in his mouth he cheers up. He's at his best if it's a blighty hit."

Here I was forced to interrupt for information.

"A blighty hit! Don't you know what that is? It's from the song they sing now, 'Carry Me Back to Blighty.' Blighty's England. I think it's a Hindustani word that means home, but I won't be sure about that. Anyhow, a blighty hit's not bad enough to keep you in France, but bad enough to send you to England. Those are the slow injuries that aren't so very dangerous.

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“Next to getting to Blighty a fellow wants a cigarette. I never saw a man hit so bad he couldn’t smoke. I saw a British ’plane coming down one day and the tail of it was red. The Germans fix up their machines like that, but I knew this wasn’t paint on a British plane. He made a tiptop landing, and when he got out we saw part of his shoulder was shot away and he had a hole in the top of his head. ‘That was a close call,’ he said, and he took out a cigarette, lighted it and took two puffs. Then he keeled over.”

The little major and I got out to stretch our legs at a station platform, and I noticed that salutes were punctiliously given and returned. “I suppose,” I said, quoting a bit of misinformation somebody had supplied, “that out at the front all this saluting is cut out.”

“No, sir,” said the little major sternly. “Somebody told that to the last batch of recruits that was sent over, but we taught ’em better soon. They don’t get the lay of it quite. It isn’t me they salute; it’s the King’s uniform. Of course, I don’t expect a man to salute if I pass him in a trench; but if he’s

smoking a cigarette I expect him to throw it away and I expect him to straighten up.

“You’ve got to let up on some things, of course. There’s shaving now. I expect my men to shave every day when they’re not in the line, but you can’t expect that in the trenches. Naturally, I shave myself every day anyhow, but I’m lenient with the men. I don’t insist on their shaving more than every other day.”

When I got to the château where the visiting correspondents stay I found the officers at mess. There were four British officers, a Roumanian general, a member of Parliament, a Dutch painter and an American newspaperman. As at Verdun the conversation had swung around to literature. It all began because somebody said something about Shaw having put up at the château when he visited the front.

“Awful ass,” said an English officer who had met the playwright out there. “He was no end of nuisance for us. Why, when he got out here we found he was a vegetarian, and we

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had to chase around and have omelettes fixed up for him every day."

"I censored his stuff," said another. "I didn't think much of it, but I made almost no changes. Some of it was a little subtle, but I let it get by."

"I heard him out here," said a third officer, "and he talked no end of rot. He said the Germans had made a botch of destroying towns. He said he could have done more damage to Arras with a hammer than the Germans did with their shells. Of course, he couldn't begin to do it with a hammer, and, anyway, he wouldn't be let. I suppose he never thought of that. Then he said that the Germans were doing us a great favor by their air raids. He said they were smashing up things that were ugly and unsanitary. That's silly. We could pull them down ourselves, you know, and, anyhow, in the last raid they hit the postoffice."

"The old boy's got nerve, though," interrupted another officer. "I was out at the front with him near Arras and there was some pretty lively shelling going on around us. I

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told him to put on his tin hat, but he wouldn't do it. I said, 'Those German shell splinters may get you,' and he laughed and said if the Germans did anything to him they'd be mighty ungrateful, after all he'd done for them. He don't know the Boche."

"He told me," added a British journalist, "'when I want to know about war I talk to soldiers.' I asked him: 'Do you mean officers or Tommies?' He said that he meant Tommies.

"Now you know how much reliance you can put in what a Tommy says. He'll either say what he thinks you want him to say or what he thinks you don't want him to say. I told Shaw that, but he paid no attention."

Here the first officer chimed in again. "Well, I stick to what I've said right along. I don't see where Shaw's funny. I think he's silly."

The major who sat at the head of the table deftly turned the conversation away from literary controversy. "What did you think of Conan Doyle?" he said.

Bright and early next morning we started

out to follow in the footsteps of Shaw. We went through country which had been shocked and shaken by both sides in their battles and then dynamited in addition by the retreating Germans. I stood in Peronne which the Germans had dynamited with the greatest care. They left the town for dead, but against a shattered wall was a sign which read, "Regimental cinema tonight at the Splinters—CHARLIE CHAPLIN IN SHANGHAIED." This was first aid. A frozen man is rubbed with snow and a town which has suffered German frightfulness is regaled with Charlie Chaplin.

Life will come back to that town in time and to others. After all life is a rubber band and it will be just as it was only an instant after they let go. We turned down the road to Arras and drove between fields which had been burned to cinders and trodden into mud by men and guns only a few weeks ago. Now the poppies were sweeping all before them. Into the trenches they went and over. First line, second line, third line, each fell in turn to the redcoats. They were so thick that the earth seemed to bleed for its wounds.

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Presently we were in Arras and our officer led us into the cathedral. "We won't stay in here long," said the officer. "The Germans drop a shell in here every now and then and the next one may bring the rest of the walls down. People keep away from here." This indeed seemed a very citadel of destruction and loneliness, but as we turned to go we heard a mournful noise from an inner room. We investigated and found a Tommy practicing on the cornet. He was playing a piece entitled, "Progressive Exercises for the Cornet—Number One." He stood up and saluted.

"Have the Germans bombarded the town at all today?" the captain asked.

"Yes, sir," said the Tommy. "They bombarded the square out in front here this morning."

"Did they get anybody?"

"No, sir, only a Frenchman, sir," replied the Tommy with stiff formality.

"Was there any other activity?"

"Yes, sir, there were some aeroplanes over about an hour ago and they dropped some

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bombs in there," said the Tommy indicating a street just back of the cathedral.

"And what were we doing?" persisted the captain.

"We were trying out some new anti-aircraft ammunition," explained the Tommy patiently, "but I don't think it was any good, sir, because most of it came down and buried itself over there," and he indicated a spot some fifteen or twenty feet from his music room.

The captain could think of no more inquiries just then and the soldier quickly folded up his cornet and his music and after saluting with decent haste left the cathedral. For the sake of his music he was willing to endure shells and bombs and shrapnel fragments but questions put him off his stride entirely. He fled, perhaps, to some shell hole for solitude.

From the cathedral we went to the town hall. Here again one could not but be impressed with the futility of destruction. The Germans have torn the building cruelly with their shells and their dynamite, but beauty is tough. Dynamite a bakeshop and you have only a mess. Shell a tailor's and rubbish is

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left. But it is different when you begin to turn your guns against cathedrals and town halls. If a structure is built beautifully it will break beautifully. The dynamite has cut fine lines in the jagged ruins of the Town Hall. The Germans have smashed everything but the soul of the building. They didn't get that. It was not for want of trying, but dynamite has its limitations.

We got up to the lines the next day and had a fine view of the opposing trench systems for ten or twelve miles. Our box seat was on top of a hill just back of Messines ridge. We saw a duel between two aeroplanes, the explosion of a munitions dump, and no end of big gun firing but the officer who conducted us said that it was a dull morning. Our day on the hill was a clear one after three days of low clouds, and all the fliers were out in force. Almost two dozen British 'planes were to be seen from the hilltop, as well as several captive balloons. Although the English 'planes flew well over the German lines, they drew no fire, but presently the sky began to grow woolly. Little round white patches appeared, one against

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the other, cutting the sky into great flannel figures. Then we saw above it all a 'plane so high as to be hardly visible. Indeed, we should not have seen it but for the telltale shrapnel. These were our guns, and this was no friend. Now it was almost over our heads. It seemed intent upon attacking one of the British captive balloons, which could only stand and wait. The guns were snarling now. We were close enough to hear the anger in every shot. The shrapnel broke behind, below, above and in front of the aeroplane, but on it sailed, untouched, like a glass ball in a Buffalo Bill shooting trick.

Yet here was no poor marksmanship, for at ten thousand feet the air pilot has forty seconds to dodge each shell. He merely has to watch the flash of the gun and then dive or rise or slide to right or left. Sometimes, indeed, the shrapnel lays a finger on him, but he whirls away out of its grip like a quarterback in a broken field. The guns stopped firing, although the German was still above the British lines. Somebody was up to tackle him at closer range. Where our 'plane came from

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we did not know. The sky was filled all morning with English fliers, but each appeared to have definite work in hand, and not one paid the slightest attention to the German intruder. This was a special assignment. When we caught sight of the English flier he had maneuvered into a position behind his German adversary. We caught the flashes from the machine guns, but we could hear no sound of the fight above us. The 'planes darted forward and back. They were clever little bantams, these, and neither was able to put in a finishing blow. Our stolid guiding officer was up on his toes now and rooting as if it were some sporting event in progress. Looking upward at his comrade, ten thousand feet aloft, he cried: "Let him have it!"

The hostile attitude of the spectators or something else discouraged the German and he turned and made for his own lines. The Englishman pursued him for a time and then gave up the chase. The consensus of opinion was that the Briton had won the decision on points.

"They've been making a dead set for our

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balloons all week," said an English soldier after the German 'plane had been driven away.

"If they get the balloon does that mean that they get the observer?" I asked in my ignorance.

"Lord bless you no," said the soldier. "No danger for 'im, sir. He just jumps out with a parachute."

Next we turned our attention to the big gun firing. We could see the flash of the guns of both sides and hear the whistle of the shells. After the flash one might mark the result if he had a sharp eye. There was no trouble in following the progress of one particular British shell for an instant after the flash a high column of smoke arose above a town which the Germans held. A minute or so later we had our own column for a German shell hit one of the many munition dumps scattered about behind the British front. Our own hill was pocked with shell holes and the tower near which we stood was nibbled nigh to bits and we had a wakeful, stimulating feeling that almost any minute something might drop on or

near us. The Tommy with whom we shared the view undeceived us.

“This hill!” he said. “Why there was a time when it was as much as your life was worth to stand up here and now the place’s nothing but a bloomin’ Cook’s tour resort.”

Our last day with the army was spent at the University of Death and Destruction where the men from England take their final courses in warfare. We began with a class which was having a lesson in defense against bombs. A tin can exploded at the feet of a Scotchman and peppered his bare legs. Five hundred soldiers roared with laughter, for the man in the kilt had flunked his recitation in “Trench Raiding.” Officially the Scot was dead, for the tin can represented a German bomb. They were cramming for war in the big training camp and they played roughly. The imitation bombs carried a charge of powder generous enough to insure wholesome respect. The Scot, indeed, had to retire to have a dressing made.

The trench in which the class was hard at work was perfect in almost every detail, save

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that it lacked a back wall. This was removed for the sake of the audience. An instructor stood outside and every now and again he would toss a bomb at his pupils. He played no favorites. The good and the bad scholar each had his chance. In order to pass the course the soldier had to show that he knew what to do to meet the bomb attack. He might take shelter in the traverse; he might kick the bomb far away; or, with a master's degree in view, he might pick up the imitation bomb and hurl it far away before it could explode. Speed and steady nerves were required for this trick. An explosion might easily blow off a finger or two. Yet, after all, it was practice. Later there might be other bombs designed for bigger game than fingers.

We followed the students from bombs to bayonets. The men with the cold steel were charging into dummies marked with circles to represent spots where hits were likely to be vital. It looked for all the world like football practice and the men went after the dummies as the tacklers used to do at Soldiers' Field of an afternoon when the coach had pinned blue

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sweaters and white "Y's" on the straw men. There was the same severely serious spirit. In a larger field a big class was having instruction in attack. Before them were three lines of trenches protected by barbed wire ankle high. At a signal they left their trench and darted forward to the next one. Here they paused for a moment and then set sail for the second trench. At another signal they were out of that and into a third trench. From here they blazed away at some targets on the hill representing Germans and consolidated their positions. Instructors followed the charge along the road which bordered the instruction field. They mingled praise and blame, but ever they shouted for speed. "Make this go now," would be the cry, and to a luckless wight who had been upset by barbed wire and sent sprawling: "What do you mean by lying there, anyhow?"

It was a New Zealand company which I saw, and in the class were a number of Maoris. These were fine, husky men of the type seen in the Hawaiian Islands. All played the game hard, but none seemed so imaginatively stirred

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by it as the Maoris. They were fairly carried away by the enthusiasm of a charge, and left their trenches each time shouting at top voice. The capture of the third trench by no means satisfied them. They wanted to go on and on. If the officer had not called a halt there's no telling but that they might have invaded the next field and bayoneted the bombardiers. Over the hill there was a rattle of machine guns and beyond that a more scattering volume of musketry. We stopped and watched the men at their rifle practice.

"You wouldn't believe it," said the instructor, "but we've got to keep hammering it home to men that rifles are meant to shoot with. For a time you heard nothing but bayonets. A gun might have been nothing more than a pike. Later everything was bombs, and sometimes soldiers just stood and waited till the Boches got close, so that they could peg something at 'em. But when these men go away they're going to know that the bombs and the bayonet are the frill. It's the shooting that counts."

We saw a good deal of the British army dur-

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ing our trip but the thing which gave me the clearest insight into the fundamental fighting, sporting spirit of the army was a story which an officer told me of an incident which occurred in the sector where he was stationed. An enlisted man and an officer were trapped during a daylight patrol when a mist lifted and they had to take shelter in a shell hole. They lay there for some hours, and then the soldier endeavored to make a break back for his own trenches. No sooner had his head and shoulders appeared above the shell hole than a German machine gun pattered away at him. He was hit and the officer started to climb up to his assistance.

“No, don’t come,” said the soldier. “They got me, sir.” He put his hand up and indicated a wound on the left hand side of his chest. “It was a damn good shot,” he said.

## CHAPTER XVII

### BACK FROM PRISON

FRANCE has a better right to fight than any nation in the world because she can wage war, even a slow and bitter war, with a gesture. Misery does not blind the French to the dramatic. Even the tears and the heartache are made to count for France. We saw wounded men come back from German prison camps and Lyons made the coming of these wrecked and shattered soldiers a pageant. Gray men, grim men, silent men stood up and shouted like boys in the bleachers because there was someone there to greet them with the right word. There is always somebody in France who has that word.

This time it was a lieutenant colonel of artillery. He was a man big as Jess Willard and his voice boomed through the station like one of his own huge howitzers as he swung his

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arm above his head and said to the men from Germany: "I want you all to join with me in a great cry. Open your throats as well as your hearts. The cry we want to hear from you is one that you want to give because for so long a time you have been forbidden to cry 'Vive la France.'" The big man shouted as he said it, but this time the howitzer voice was not heard above the roar of other voices.

The French soldiers who came back from Germany had been for some little time in a recuperation camp in Switzerland. A few were lame, many were thin and peaked and almost all were gray, but the Lyonnaise said that this was not nearly so bad as the last train load of men from German prisons. There were no madmen this time.

The windows of the cars were crowded with faces as the train came slowly into the station. There was no shouting until the big man made his speech. Some of the returned prisoners waved their hands, but most of them greeted the soldiers and the crowds which waited for them with formal salutes. A file of soldiers was drawn up along the platform

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and outside the station was a squad of cavalry trying to stand just as motionless as the infantry. There were horns and trumpets inside the station and out and they blew a nipping, rollicking tune as the train rolled in. The wounded men, all but a few on stretchers, descended from the cars in military order. Lame men with canes hopped and skipped in order to keep step with their more nimble comrades.

There was an old woman in black who darted out from the crowd and wanted to throw her arms around the neck of a young soldier, but he waved to her not to come. You see she still thought of him as a boy, but that had been three years ago. He was a marching man now and it would never do to break the formation. Group by group they came from the train with a new blare of the trumpets for each unit. There were 416 French soldiers, thirty-seven French officers and seventeen Belgians. They marched past the receiving group of officers and saluted punctiliously, though it was a little bit hard because their arms were full of flowers. When they had all been gathered in

the waiting room of the station the big colonel made his speech. He did not speak very long because the returned soldiers could see out of the corner of their eyes that just across the room were big tables with scores of expectant and anticipatory bottles of champagne. But there was fizz, too, to the talk of the big colonel. I had the speech translated for me afterwards but I guessed that some of it was about the Germans, for I caught the phrase "inhuman cruelty."

"You have a right to feel now that you are back on the soil of France after all these years of inhuman cruelty that your work is done," said the colonel, "but there is still something that you must do. There is something that you ought to do. You will tell everybody of the wrongs the Germans have inflicted upon you. You will tell exactly what they have done and you will thus serve France by increasing the hatred between our people and their people."

The soldiers and the crowd cheered then almost as loudly as they did later in the great shout of "Vive la France." The gray men, the grim men and the silent men were stirred by

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what the colonel said because they did and will forever have a quarrel with the German people.

“We are doubly glad to welcome you back to France because our hearts have been so cheered by the coming of America,” continued the colonel. “Victory seems nearer and nearer and vengeance for all the things you have endured.” It was then that he snatched the great shout of “Vive la France” from the crowd.

As the din died down the corks began to pop and men who a little time before had not even been sure of a proper ration of water began to gulp champagne out of tin cups. The sting of the wine, the excitement and the din were too much for one returned prisoner. He had scarcely lifted his glass to his lips than he fell over in a heap and there was one more weary wanderer to make his return sickabed in a stretcher. But the rest marched better as they came out of the station with band tunes blaring in their ears and God knows what tunes singing in their hearts as they clanked along the cobbles. For they had been dead men and they were back in France and there was sun

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in the sky. When they crossed the bridge they broke ranks. The old woman in black was there and for just a minute the marching man became a boy again.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### FINISHING TOUCHES

THE American army had begun to find itself when October came round. Perhaps it had not yet gained a complete army consciousness, but there could be no doubt about company spirit. Chaps who had been civilians only a few months before now spoke of "my company" as if they had grown up with the outfit. They were also ready to declare loudly and profanely in public places that H or L or K or I, as the case might be, was the best company in the army. Some were willing to let the remark stand for the world.

Too much credit cannot be given to the captains of the first American Expeditionary Force. A captain commands more men now than ever before in the American army and he has more power. This was particularly true in France where many companies had a little vil-

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lage to themselves. The captain, therefore, was not only a military leader, a father confessor, and a gents' furnisher, but also an ambassador to the people of a small section of France. The colonels and majors and the rest are the fellows who think up things to be done, but it is the captains who do them.

Of course that wasn't the way the junior officers looked at it. A man who was a first lieutenant when the army came to France told us: "A first lieutenant is supposed to know everything and do everything; a captain is supposed to know everything and do nothing, and a major is supposed to know nothing and do nothing."

We were delighted early this year when we heard that he had been made a major, for we immediately sat down and telegraphed to him: "After what you told us this summer, we are sure you will be an excellent major."

By October much of the feeling between the officers of the regular army and the reserve had been smoothed out, but it was not like that in the early days. Once when a young reserve major was put in command of a battalion, a

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regular army captain who was much his senior in years observed: "I think there ought to be an army regulation that no reserve officer shall be appointed to command a battalion without the consent of his parents or guardian." But as the work grew harder and harder many little jealousies of the army were simply sweated out. It was easy to do that, for the American army woke up, or rather was awakened, every morning at five o'clock. There was a Kansas farmer in one company who was always up and waiting for the buglers. He said that the schedule of the American army always left him at a loss as to what to do with his mornings. But for the rest the trumpeters were compelled to blow their loudest. Roll call was at five-thirty and this was followed with setting up exercises designed to give the men an appetite for the six o'clock breakfast. This was almost always a hearty meal. The poilus who began the day with a cup of black coffee and a little war bread were amazed to see the doughboys start off at daylight with Irish stew, or bacon or ham or mush and occasionally eggs in addition to white bread and coffee.

After breakfast came sick call, at which men who felt unable to drill for any reason were obliged to talk it over with the doctor. Those who had no ailments went to work vigorously in making up their cots and cleaning their quarters. At seven they fell in and marched away to the training ground. Mornings were usually devoted to bombing, machine gun and automatic rifle practice. A little after eleven the doughboys started back to their billets for dinner. This was likely to consist of beans and boiled beef or salmon, or there would be a stew again or corned beef hash. The most prevalent vegetables were potatoes and canned corn. Dinner might also include a pudding, nearly always rice or canned fruit. Sometimes there was jam and, of course, coffee and bread were abundant.

During the latter part of the training period the home dinner was often omitted in favor of a meal prepared at the training ground. The afternoon work began a little before two. Rifle practice, drills and bayonet work were usually the phases of warfare undertaken at this time of day. Labor ceased at four with supper,

which was much the same sort of meal as dinner, at five-thirty. After supper the soldier's time was pretty much his own. He could loaf about the town hall and listen to the army band play selections from "The Fair Co-ed," "The Prince of Pilsen" or any one of a score of comic operas long dead and forgotten by everyone but army bandmasters, or he could go to the Y. M. C. A. and read or write letters or play checkers or perhaps pool of the sort which is possible on a small portable table. He was due back in quarters and in bed at nine and he was always asleep at one minute and thirty seconds after nine.

The training hours became more crowded, if not longer, as the time drew nearer when the American army should go to the front. Everybody was anxious that they should make a good showing. Trench problems had to be considered and gas and bayonet work which was the phase in which the training was lagging somewhat. It was also considered useful that the men should have some experience with shell fire before they heard guns fired in anger, and so it was arranged that a sham battle should

take place in which the French would fire a barrage over the heads of the American troops. The first plan was that the doughboys should advance behind this barrage as in actual warfare and attack a system of practice trenches. Later it was decided that it was not worth while to risk possible casualties, as the men could learn almost as much although held four or five hundred yards behind the barrage.

The bombardment began with thirty-six shots to the minute and was gradually raised to fifty-two. The doughboys were allowed to sit down to watch the show. Our soldiers seemed a bit unfeeling, for not one expressed any regret at the destruction of Hindenburg, Ludendorff, and Mackensen, although they had spent many a happy afternoon under the broiling sun constructing this elaborate trench system. None of the men seemed disturbed, either, by the unfamiliar whistling sounds over head. All the doughboys wore steel helmets but two were slightly injured by small fragments from shells which fell a little short. In both cases the wounded man had lowered the protective value of his helmet somewhat by

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sitting on it. After the first interest in the show wore off many proved their ability to steal naps in spite of the bickering of the big guns. The marines, for instance, had marched eighteen miles after rising at 3:30 in the morning, and although the marine corps is singularly hardy, a few made up lost sleep. The patter of the French seventy-fives was no more than rain on the roof to these men when they could find sufficient cover to sleep unobserved.

The most fortunate soldiers were those who were stationed in a fringe of woods which bordered on the big meadow. Here the doughboys did a little shooting on their own account when no officers were at hand. In a sudden lull of gunfire I heard a voice say: "Shoot it all," and there was a rattle of dice in the bottom of a steel helmet.

When the bombardment was at its height a big hawk sailed over the field full in the pathway of hundreds of shells. He circled about calmly in spite of the shrieking things which whizzed by him and then he turned contemptuously and flew away very slowly. Perhaps

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he was disappointed because it was only a sham battle.

Of course some of the officers saw the real thing. Many made trips to the French front and a few fired some shots at the German lines just to set a good precedent. American officers attended all the French offensives of the summer as invited guests. Brigadier General George Duncan and Lieutenant Colonel Campbell King were cited by the French army for the croix de guerre after they had spent some thrilling hours at Verdun. The awards were largely complimentary, of course, but the American officers saw plenty of action. According to the French officers General Duncan was at an advanced observation post when the Germans spotted it and began pouring in shell. One fragment hit the General's hat and the colonel in charge advised him that it would be well to move back to a safer point of vantage. Duncan replied that this was the first show he had ever seen and that he did not want to give up his front row seat if he could help it.

Lieutenant Colonel King paid visits to the first aid dressing stations under heavy fire and

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encouraged the wounded with words of good cheer in bad French. The night before the attack his dugout was flooded with poison vapor from German gas shells, but he awoke in time to arouse his two companions, who got their masks on in time to prevent injury. Another American officer who shall be nameless found it difficult to sit back as a spectator when so much was going on. He was a brigadier general, but this was his first taste of war on a big scale. The French offensive aroused his enthusiasm so much that he said to a fellow American officer: "Nobody's watching us now, let's sneak up ahead there and throw a few bombs." The second officer, who was only a captain, reminded him of his rank.

"I can't help that," said the General, "I've just got to try and see if I can't bomb a few squareheads." Discipline was overlooked for a moment then as the captain restrained the General with physical force from going forward to try out his arm.

The British now seem to be able to give the Germans more than they want in gas, but this superiority did not come until late in the year.

American officers who went to the front returned with a profound respect for German gas and, in fact, all gas. This feeling was reflected in the thoroughgoing training which the men received in gas and masks. It began with lectures by the company commanders in which it is certain no very optimistic picture of poison vapor was painted. Then came long drills in putting on the mask in three counts and holding the breath during the adjustment. The contrivance used was not a little like a catcher's mask and this simplified the problem somewhat. The men carried the masks with them everywhere and developed great speed in getting under protection. Conscientious officers harassed their men by calling out "gas attack" at unexpected moments such as when men were shaving or eating or sleeping. Finally the doughboys were actually sent through gas.

Big air-proof cellars were constructed in each village and here the tests were held. As a matter of fact, the gas used was a form of tear gas, calculated to irritate the eyes and nose and perhaps to cause blindness for a few hours. It would not cause permanent injury even if

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a mask were improperly adjusted. The comparative harmlessness of the test vapor was kept secret. When the men went down the steps they thought that one whiff of the air in the cellar would be fatal and so they were most careful that each strap should be in its place. Most of them had shaved twice over on the morning of the test so that the mask should fit closely to the side of the face.

The first man to go in was a captain and when he came out again obviously alive and seemingly healthy, the doughboys were ready to take a chance. A young soldier in the second batch to visit the gas chamber had taken the tales of the vapor horrors a bit too much to heart. He became panicstricken after one minute in the underground vault and had to be helped out, faint and trembling.

“What’s the matter?” said his officer. “Are you afraid?”

“Yes, sir,” the boy answered frankly. “But I want to try it again,” he added quickly. He did, too. And what is more, he remained in for an extra period as self-discipline for his soul. When he came out he leaned against a fence

and was sick, but he was triumphant because he had proved to himself that his second wind of grit was stronger than his nerves or his stomach.

As the afternoon wore on a trip through the gas chamber became a lark rather than an adventure and each batch before it went in was greeted by such remarks as "Never mind the good-byes, Snooty! Just pay me that \$2 you owe me before you check off."

"Who invented this gas stuff, anyway?" asked a fat soldier, as he sat in the stifling vault, puffing and perspiring. "The Germans," he was told.

"Well," he panted, "I'm going to give 'em hell for this."

There was other practice which seemed less warlike. Particular attention was paid to signaling and men on hilltops stood and waved their arms at each other from dawn until sunset. I stood one bright day with an expert who was trying the utmost capacity of the man stationed on the hill across the valley. The officer made the little flags whirl through the air like bunting on a battleship. He looked across

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the peaceful countryside and saw war dangers on every hand. The gas attack which his flags predicted seemed nothing more to me than the dust raised by a passing army truck. He signaled that the tanks were coming, but they mooed as they moved and the aeroplanes of which he spoke in dots and dashes cawed most distinctly. With a twist of his wrist he would summon a battery and with another send them back again. There was an emphatic whip and swirl of color, and in answer to the signal mythical infantry swarmed over theoretical trenches to attack shadow soldiers. The task of the receiving soldier was made more difficult because every now and then the officer would vary his military messages with "Double-header at the Polo Grounds today" or "Please pass the biscuits." But the soldier read them all correctly. Biscuits were just as easy for him as bullets.

The men were also tested for their ability to carry oral messages. As a result of this drill there were several new mule drivers. The test message was, "Major Blank sends his compliments to Captain Nameless and orders him

to move L company one-half mile to the east and support K company in the attack.” After giving out this message the officer moved to the top of a hill to receive it. The first soldier who came up had difficulty in delivering the message because English seemed more alien to him than Italian. He had it all right at that, except that he made it a mile and a half. The next three delivered the message correctly, but then a large soldier came panting up, fairly bursting with excitement, and exclaimed: “The major says he hopes you’re feeling all right and please take your company a mile to the east and attack K company.” The names of such careless messengers were noted down so that they might not cause blunders in battle.

Precaution was taken against another source of mistakes by sending American officers out to drill French units. A few found no trouble in giving orders which the poilus could understand, but some had bad cases of stage fright.

“I almost wiped out a French battalion,” said one young West Pointer. “I got ‘em started all right with ‘avance’ and they went off at a great clip. I noticed that there was a

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cliff right ahead of us and I began to try and think how you said 'halt' in French. I couldn't remember and I didn't want to get out in front and flag 'em by waving my arms, so we just kept marching right on toward the cliff. They had their orders and they kept on going. It began to look as if we'd all march right off the cliff just to satisfy their pride and mine, but a French lieutenant came to the rescue with 'a gauche en quatre!' I didn't know that one, but I was a goat just the same. I could have gotten away with 'halt' all right, because I found out afterwards that it's 'halte' in French and that sounds almost the same."

The British as well as the French helped in the final polishing of the doughboys who were to go to the trenches. An English major and three sergeants came to camp to teach bayonet work. They brought a healthy touch of blunt criticism. The major told some young officers who were studying in a training school that he wanted a trench dug. He told them the length and the depth which he wanted and the time at which he expected it to be finished. It was not done at the appointed hour. "Oh, I say,

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that's rotten, you know!" exclaimed the big Englishman. The American officer in charge was somewhat startled. The French were always careful to phrase unfavorable criticism in pleasant words and there were times when the sting was not felt. A rebuke so directly expressed surprised the American so much that he started to make excuses for his men. He explained that the soil in which they were digging was full of rocks. The British major cut him short.

"Never mind about the excuses," he said, "that was rotten work and you know it."

Curiously enough the American army got along very well with this particular instructor and he on his part had the highest praise for the capabilities of the American after he had sized them up in training. He was more successful than the French in wheedling the Americans into visualizing actual war conditions in their practice.

"Never let your men remember that they are charging dummies," said the visiting major to an American officer. "Make them think the

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straw men are Germans. It can be done even without the use of dummies. Watch me."

A remarkable demonstration followed. The major sent for a little Cockney sergeant. "Now," he said, "this stick of mine with a knob on the end is a German. Show these Americans how you would go after him."

The little sergeant did some brisk work in slashing at the end of the stick with his bayonet but the big major was not content. "Remember," he said, "this is a German," and then he would add suddenly every now and again: "Look out, my lad—he's coming at you!"

And bye-and-bye the insinuation began to take effect. The little man had spent two years on the line and it was easy to see that bit by bit he was beginning to visualize the stick with a cloth knob as a Boche adversary. His thrusts grew fiercer and fiercer. The point of his bayonet flashed into the cloth knob again and again. He was trembling with rage as he played the battle game. As he finally flung himself upon the stick and knocked it out of the major's hands the officer called a halt.

"There," he said to the Americans, "if your

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men are to train well, you've got to make them believe it's true, and you can do it."

The British added lots of snap to the American training because they knew how to arouse the competitive spirit. They made even the most routine sort of a drill a game, and whether the men were bayoneting dummies or shooting at tin cans the little Britishers kept them at top speed by stirring up rivalry between the various organizations. Sometimes the slang was a bit puzzling. The marines, for instance, didn't know just what their bayonet instructor meant when he said: "Come on, you dreadnoughts, give 'em the old 'kamerad.' "

Curiously enough the other specialty in addition to bayonet work which the British taught the doughboys was organized recreation. Thus a British sergeant would take his squad from practicing the grimdest feature of all war training and set the men to tossing beanbags or playing leapfrog. Prisoner's base, red rover and a score of games played in the streets of every American city were used to bring relaxation to the soldiers. There were other rough and tumble games in which the players buf-

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feted each other assiduously in a neutral part of the body with knotted towels. The emphasis was put upon the ludicrous in all these games.

“This may seem childish and silly to you,” said the major, “but we have found on the line that the quickest way to bring back the spirit of a regiment which has been battered in battle is to take the men as soon as they come from the trenches and set them to playing these foolish little games which they knew when they were lads. When we get them to laughing again we know we’ve made them forget the fight.”

Mostly it wasn’t play. There were long mornings and afternoons spent in battalion problems in which the doughboys again and again captured the position made up of the trenches Roosevelt, Taft and Wilson. One general pointed out that communication between Roosevelt and Taft would be necessarily difficult and between Roosevelt and Wilson all but impossible. The doughboys overcame these difficulties as they advanced under theo-

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retical barrages and hurled live bombs into the trenches or thereabouts.

The last set event of the training period was a big field meet in which picked companies competed in military events. The meet began with musketry and worked through bayonets, hand grenades, automatic rifles, and machine guns, ending with trench digging. It was supposed that this would be the least exciting, but two companies came up to the last event tied for the point trophy. Honor and a big silver trophy and everything hung on this last event and the men could not have worked harder if they had been under German shellfire. Partisans of both sides stood nearby and shouted encouragement to their friends and heavy banter at the foe. There was organized cheering and singing, too, and a couple of bands blared while the competitors lay prone and hacked away at the tough soil. One band played "Won't You Come and Waltz With Me?" while the other favored "Sweet Rosie O'Grady." Neither seemed particularly pertinent, but there wasn't much sense of the appropriate in the third band, either, which

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played "Dearie," while the soldiers were stabbing imitation Boches in the bayonet contest.

The champions of the pick and shovel brushed some of the dirt off their uniforms and lined up to receive the prize, which was a big silver salad bowl. The best bayoneters got a sugar shaker and there were mugs and wrist watches and plain watches and all sorts of things from the commander and from General Sibert and General Castelnau. No sooner were the prizes distributed than news came that the White Sox had won the first game of the world series from the Giants and then there was more cheering. The winning company went back to camp in a big truck loudly and tunefully proclaiming to the natives: "We got style, all the while, all the while."

The Germans contributed one post graduate phase of training which was not on the program. Shortly before the troops went to the front a Zeppelin was brought down in a town within marching distance of the American training zone. The big balloon could not have been better placed if its landing had been directed by a Coney Island showman. It was

perched on two hills just by the side of a road and visitors came from miles about to look at the monster. Early comers reaped a rich harvest of souvenirs. "I only had to get three more screws loose and I'd have had the steering wheel if a French soldier hadn't come up and stopped me," complained an American correspondent.

The chasseurs left to go back into the line before the Americans started for the front. The departure of the chasseurs caused genuine regret, for in addition to a profound respect for their military ability, the American officers and men had a warm personal feeling for the troops who taught them the first rudiments of the modern art of war. In all the camps there were ceremonies for the soldiers who were leaving drills and practice attacks and sham battles to go back wherever shock troops were needed.

"When you see us later on some time," said an American officer, "we hope to make you proud of your pupils."

Although the French had already given the Americans all the fundamentals they would need they spent their last few hours in giving

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them some of the fine points and a minute description of just what conditions they might expect at the front.

“When you go up there,” said a French officer, “the soldiers you come to relieve will say that you are late. They will say that they have been waiting a long time and they will go out very quickly. Always we find when we come in that the troops in the trench have been waiting a long time and always they go out very quickly.”

As the sturdy Frenchmen marched away their cries of “bonne chance” mingled with equally hearty shouts of “good luck.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE AMERICAN ARMY MARCHES TO THE TRENCHES

THE chief press officer told us that we could spend the first night in the trenches with the American army. There were eight correspondents and we went jingling up to the front with gas masks and steel helmets hung about our necks and canned provisions in our pockets. It was dusk when we left —. Bye-and-bye we could hear the guns plainly and the villages through which we traveled all showed their share of shelling. The front was still a few miles ahead of us, but we left the cars in the square of a large village and started to walk the rest of the way. We got no further than just beyond the town. An American officer stood at the foot of an old sign post which gave the distance to Metz, but not the difficulties. He asked us our destination and when we told him that we were going to spend the first

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night in the trenches with the American army he wouldn't hear of it.

"There'll be trouble enough up there," he said, "without newspapermen."

He was a nervous man, this major. Every now and then he would look at his watch. When he looked for the fourth time within two minutes he felt that we deserved an explanation.

"I'm a little nervous," he said, "because the Boches are so quiet tonight. I've been up here looking around for almost a week and every night the Germans have done some shelling." He looked at his watch again. "The first company of my battalion must be going in now." He stood and listened for six or seven seconds but there wasn't a sound. "I wonder what those Germans are up to?" he continued. "I don't like it. I wish they'd shoot a little. This business now doesn't seem natural."

We turned back toward the town and left the major at his post still listening for some sound from up there. Soon we heard a noise, but it came from the opposite direction. Soldiers were coming. There was a bend in the

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road where it straightened out in the last two miles to the trenches. It was so dark that we could not see the men until they were almost up to us. The Americans were marching to the front. The French had instructed them and the British and now they were ready to learn just what the Germans could teach them.

The night was as thick as the mud. The darkness seemed to close behind each line of men as they went by. Even the usual marching rhythm was missing. The mud took care of that. The doughboys would have sung if they could. Shells wouldn't have been much worse than the silence. One soldier did begin in a low voice, "Tramp, tramp, tramp, the boys are marching." An officer called, "Cut out that noise." There was no tramp, tramp, tramp on that road. Feet came down squish, squish, squish. There was also the sound of the wind. That wasn't very cheerful, either, for it was rising and beginning to moan a little. It seemed to get hold of the darkness and pile it up in drifts against the camouflage screens which lined the road.

At the spot where the road turned there was

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a café and across the road a military moving picture theater. The door of the café was open and a big patch of light fell across the road. The doughboys had to go through the patch of light and it was almost impossible not to turn a bit and look through the door. There was red wine and white to be had for the asking there, and persuasion would bring an omelette. The waitress was named Marie, but they called her Madelon. She was eighteen and had black hair with red ribbons. She could talk a little English, too, but nobody came to the door of the café to see the soldiers go by. There had been a good many who passed the door of that café in three years.

The pictures could not be seen from the road, but we could hear the hum of the machine which made them move. Presently, we went to the door and looked. The theater was packed with French soldiers who were back from the front to rest. American troops were going into the trenches for the first time. Our little group of civilians had come thousands of miles to see this thing, but the poilus did not stop to watch marching men. They paid their 10 centimes

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and went into the picture show. They had an American Western film that night, and French soldiers who only the day before had been face to face with Germans, shelled and gassed and harassed from aeroplanes, thrilled as Indians chased cowboys across a canvas screen. It grew more exciting presently, for the United States cavalry came riding up across the screen and at the head of the cavalcade rode Lieutenant Wallace Kirke. The villain had spread the story that he wasn't game, but there was nothing to that. The poilus realized that before the film was done and so did the Indians.

Meanwhile the doughboys were marching by as silently as the soldiers on the screen, for this wasn't a movie-house where they synchronized bugle calls and rifle fire to the progress of the film. At one point in the story there was some gun thunder, but it came at a time when the orchestra should have been playing "Hearts and Flowers" for the love scene in the garden. Of course, these were German guns, and they were fired with the usual German disregard for art.

Probably the men who were marching to the

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trenches would have enjoyed the scene of the home-coming of the cavalry, when Lieutenant Wallace Kirke confounded the villain, who actually held a commission as major in the United States army. However, the doughboys might have spotted him for a villain from the beginning, on account of his wretched saluting. The director should have spoken to him about that.

The marching men looked at the theater as they passed by, but only one soldier spoke. He said: "I certainly would like to know for sure whether I'll ever get to go to the movies again."

They went a couple of hundred yards more without a word, and then a soldier who couldn't stand the silence any longer shouted, "Whoopee! Whoopee!" It was too dark to conduct an investigation and too close to the line to administer any rebuke loud enough to be effective, and so the nearest officer just glared in the general direction of the offender. A little bit further on the soldiers found that the road was pock-marked here and there with shell holes. They began to realize the importance of silence then, for they knew that where

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a shell had gone once it could go again. It was necessary to walk carefully, for the road was covered with casual water in every hollow, and there was no seeing a hole until you stepped in it. They managed, however, to avoid the deeper holes and to jump most of the pools.

That is, the infantry did. Late that night a teamster reported that he had driven his four mules into a shell hole and broken the rear axle of his wagon.

“Why didn’t you send a man out ahead to look out for shell holes?” asked the officer.

“I did,” said the soldier. “He fell in first.”

Presently the marching men came to the beginning of the trench system, and they were glad to get a wall on either side of them. There was no scramble, however, to be the first man in, and even the major of the battalion has forgotten the name of the first soldier to set foot in the French trenches. Some twenty or thirty men claim the honor, but it will be difficult to settle the matter with historical accuracy. A Middle Western farm boy, an Irishman with red hair or a German-American would seem to fit the circumstances best, but it’s all a matter

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of choice. As the Americans came in the French marched out.

A trench during a relief is no good place for a demonstration, but some of the poilus paused to shake hands with the Americans. There were rumors that one or two doughboys had been kissed, but I was unable to substantiate these reports. Probably they are not true, for it would not be the sort of thing a company would forget.

Although the trenches for the most part were far from the German lines, there was noise enough to attract attention over the way. The Germans did not seem to know what was going on, but they wanted to know, and they sent up a number of star shells. These are the shells which explode to release a bright light suspended from a little silk parachute. These parachutes hung in the air for several minutes and brightly illuminated No Man's Land. It was impossible to keep the Americans entirely quiet then. Some said "Oh!" and others exclaimed "Ah!" after the manner of crowds at a fire-works show.

Persiflage of this kind helped to make the

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men feel at home. Indeed, the trenches did not seem altogether unfamiliar, after all their days and nights in the practice trenches back in camp. The men were a little nervous, though, and took it out in smoking one cigarette after another. They shielded the light under their trench helmets. After an hour or so a green rocket went up and all the soldiers in the American trenches put on their gas masks. They had been drilled for weeks in getting them on fast and a green rocket was the signal agreed upon as the warning for an attack. Presently the word came from the trenches that the masks were not necessary. There had been no attack. The rocket came from the German trenches. It was quiet then all along the short trench line with the exception of an occasional rifle shot. The wind was making a good deal of noise out in the mess of weeds just beyond the wire and it sounded like Germans to some of the boys. It was clearer now and a sharp eyed man could see the stakes of the wire. They were a bit ominous, too.

“I was looking at one of those stakes,” a doughboy told me, “and I kept a looking and

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alooking and all of a sudden it grew a pair of shoulders and a helmet and I let go at it."

There were others who suffered from the same optical illusion that night, but let it be said to their credit that when a working party examined the wire several days later they found some stakes which had been riddled through and through with bullets.

## CHAPTER XX

### TRENCH LIFE

THEY dragged the gun up by hand to fire the first shot in the war for the American army. The lieutenant in charge of the battery told us about it. He was standing on top of the gun emplacement and the historic seventy-five and a few others were being used every little while to fire other shots at the German lines. He had to pause, therefore, now and then in telling us history to make a little more.

“I put it up to my men,” said the lieutenant, “that we would have to wait a little for the horses and if we wanted to be sure of firing the first shot it would be a good stunt to drag the gun into place ourselves. We had a little talk and everybody was anxious for our battery to get in the first shot, so we decided to go through with it and not wait for the horses. We dragged the gun up at night and I can tell you that the last mile and a half took some pulling.

Excuse me a second——” He leaned down to the pit and began to shout figures. He made them quick and snappy like a football signal and he looked exactly like a quarterback with the tin hat on his head which might have been a leather head guard. There was a sort of eagerness about him, too, as if the ball was on the five-yard line with one minute more to play. It was all in his manner. Everything he said was professional enough. After the string of figures he shouted “watch your bubble” and then he went on with the story.

“We fired the first shot at exactly six twenty-seven in the morning,” he said. “It was a shrapnel shell.” He turned to the gunners again. “Ready to fire,” he shouted down to the men in the pit. “You needn’t put your fingers in your ears just yet,” he told us.

“It was pretty foggy when we got up to the front and we thought first we’d just have to blaze away in the general direction of the Germans without any particular observation. But all of a sudden the fog lifted and right from here we could see a bunch of Germans out fixing their wire. I gave ‘em shrapnel and they

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scattered back to their dugouts like prairie dogs. It was great!"

The lieutenant smiled at the recollection of the adventure. It meant as much to him as a sixty-yard run in the Princeton game or a touchdown against Yale. He was fortunate enough to be still getting a tingle out of the war that had nothing to do with the cold wind that was coming over No Man's Land. A moment later he grinned again and he suddenly called, "Fire," and the roar of the gun under our feet came quicker than we could get our fingers in our ears.

The gun had earned a rest now and we went down and looked at it. The gunners had chalked a name on the carriage and we found that this seventy-five which fired the first shot against the Germans was called Heinie. We wanted to know the name of the man who fired the first shot. Our consciences were troubling us about that. This was our first day up with the guns in the American sector and the men had been in two days. There were drawbacks in writing the war correspondence from a distance as we had been compelled to do up to

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this time. We'd heard, of course, that the first gun had been fired and that made it imperative that the story should be "reconstructed," as the modern newspaperman says when he's writing about something which he didn't see. Of course, everybody back home would want to know who fired the first shot. Censorship prevented the use of the name, but we couldn't blame the censors for that, because when we wrote the stories we didn't know his name or anything about him. With just one dissenting vote the correspondents decided that the man who fired the first shot must have been a red-headed Irishman. And so it was cabled. Now we wanted to know whether he was.

The lieutenant told us the name, but that didn't settle the question. It was a more or less non-committal name and the officer volunteered to find out for us. He led the party over to the mouth of another dugout and called down: "Sergeant ——, there's some newspapermen here and they want to know whether you're Irish."

Immediately there was a scrambling noise

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down in the dugout and up came the gunner on the run. "I am not," he said.

"Haven't you got an Irish father or mother or aren't any of your people Irish?" asked one of the correspondents hopefully. He was committed to the red-headed story and he was not prepared to give up yet. "Not one of 'em," said the sergeant, "I haven't got a drop of Irish blood in me. I come from South Bend, Indiana."

The party left the gunner rather disconsolately. That is, all but the hopeful correspondent. "He's Irish, all right," he said. We turned on the optimist.

"Didn't you hear him say he wasn't Irish?" we shouted.

"Oh, that's all right," answered the optimist, "you didn't expect he was going to admit it. They never do."

"Say," inquired another reporter, "did anybody notice what was the color of the sergeant's hair?"

I had, but I said nothing. There had been disillusion enough for one day. It was black with a little gray around the temples.

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The lieutenant took us to his dugout and we tried to get some copy out of him. A man from an evening newspaper spoiled our chances right away.

“I suppose,” he said, “that you made a little speech to the men before they fired that first shot?”

The little lieutenant was professional in an instant. He felt a sudden fear that his manner or his youth had led us to picture him as a romantic figure.

“What would I make a speech for?” he inquired coldly.

“Well,” said the reporter, “I should think you’d want to say something. You were going to fire the first shot of the war, and more than that, you were going to fire the first shot in anger which the American army has ever fired in Europe. Of course, I didn’t mean a speech exactly, but you must have said something.”

“No,” answered the officer, “I just gave ’em the range and then I said ‘ready to fire’ and then, ‘fire.’ It was just like this afternoon. We made it perfectly regular.”

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“In the army a thing like that’s just part of the day’s work,” the lieutenant added, with an attempted assumption of great sophistication in regard to war matters, as if this was at least his twentieth campaign.

And yet I think that if we had heard our little quarterback give his order at six twenty-seven on that misty morning there would have been something in his voice when he said “fire” which would have betrayed him to us. I think it must have been a little sharper, a little faster and a little louder for this first shot than it will be when he calls “fire” for the thousand-and-tenth round.

The guns had decided to call it a day by this time and so we headed for the trenches. We had to travel across a big bare stretch of country which was wind-swept and rain-soaked on this particular afternoon. Every now and then somebody fell into a shell hole, for the meadow was well slashed up, although there didn’t seem to be anything much to shoot at. On the whole, the sector chosen for the first Americans in the trenches might well be called a quiet front. There was shelling back and forth each day,

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but many places were immune. Some villages just back of the French lines had not been fired at for almost a year, although they were within easy range of field pieces, and the French in return didn't fire at villages in the German lines. This was by tacit agreement. Both sides had held the lines in this part of the country lightly and both sides were content to sit tight and not stir up trouble.

Things livened up after the Americans came in because the Germans soon found out that new troops were opposing them and they wanted to identify the units. Some of the increasing liveliness was also due to the fact that American gunners were anxious to get practice and fired much more than the French had done. Indeed, an American officer earned a rebuke from his superiors because he fired into a German village which had been hitherto immune. This was a mistake, for the Germans immediately retaliated by shelling a French village and the civilian population was forced to move out. For more than a year they had lived close to the battle lines in comparative safety. On the night the American troops

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moved in to the trenches a baby was born in a village less than a mile from one of our battalion headquarters. Major General Sibert became her godfather and the child was christened Unis in honor of *Les Etats Unis*.

The increase in artillery activity had hardly begun on the day we paid our visit. No German shells fell near us as we crossed the meadow, but when we reached a battalion headquarters the major in charge pointed with pride to a German shell which had landed on top of his kitchen that morning. The rain had played him a good service, for the shell simply buried itself, fragments and all. He did not seem properly appreciative of the weather. "All Gaul," he said, "is divided into three parts and two of them are water."

Still, we found ourselves drier in the trenches than out of them. They were floored with boards and well lined. As trenches go they were good, but, of course, that isn't saying a great deal. We were the first newspapermen to enter the American trenches and so we wanted to see the first line, although it was growing dark. We wound around and around

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for many yards and it was hard walking for some of us, as the French had built these trenches for short men. It was necessary to walk with a crouch like an Indian on the movie warpath. This was according to instructions, but we may have been unduly cautious, for not a hostile shot was fired while we were in the first line. It was barely possible to see the German trenches through the mist and still more difficult to realize that there was a menace in the untidy welts of mud which lay at the other side of the meadow. But the point from which we looked across to the German line was the very salient where the Germans made their first raid a week later and captured twelve men, killed three, and wounded five.

The doughboys wouldn't let us go without pointing out all the sights. To the right was the apple tree. Here the Germans used to come on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the French on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and gather fruit without molestation so long as not more than two came at a time. This was another tacit agreement in this quiet front, for the tree was in easy rifle range.

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One of the doughboys unwittingly broke that custom by taking a shot at two Germans who went to get apples.

“I like apples myself,” he said, “and I just couldn’t lie still and watch a squarehead carry them away by the armful.”

The Hindenburg Rathskeller lay to the left of our trench, but it was only dimly visible through the rain. This battered building was once a tiny roadside café. Now patrols take shelter behind its walls at night and try to find cheer in the room where only a few broken bottles remain. The poilus maintain that on dark nights the ghosts of cognac, of burgundy and even champagne flit about in and out of the broken windows and that a lucky soldier may sometimes detect, by an inner warmth and tingle, the ghost of some drink that is gone. Sometimes it is a German patrol which spends the night in No Man’s Café. It is more or less a custom to allow whichever side gets to the café first to hold it for the night, since it is a strong defensive position in the dark. The night before our visit an American patrol reached the café and found that the Germans

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who had been there the night before had placed above the shattered door of the little inn a sign which read: "Hindenburg Rathskeller." Silently but swiftly one of the doughboys scratched out the name with a pencil and left a sign of his own. When next the Germans came they found that Hindenburg's Rathskeller had become the Baltimore Dairy Lunch.

Several hundred yards behind the Baltimore Dairy Lunch is another ruined house and it was here that the Americans killed their first German. Even on clear days Germans in groups of not more than two would sometimes come from their trenches to the house. The French thought that they had a machine gun there, but it was not worth while to waste shells on parties of one or two and as the range was almost 1700 yards the Germans felt comparatively immune from rifle fire. Two doughboys saw a German walking along the road one bright morning and as they had telescopic sights on their rifles they were anxious to try a shot. One of the men was a sergeant and the other a corporal.

"That's my German," said the sergeant.

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“I saw him first,” objected the corporal, and so they agreed to count five and then fire together. One or both of them hit him, for down he came.

When we got back to the second line the men were having supper. The food supplied to the soldiers in the trenches was hot and adequate and moderately abundant. A few of the men complained that they got only two meals a day, but I found that there was an early ration of coffee and bread which these soldiers did not count as enough of a breakfast to be mentioned as a meal. This comes at dawn and then there are meals at about eleven and five. One of the men with whom I talked was mournful.

“We don’t get anything much but slum,” he said, when I asked him, “How’s the food?” That did not sound appetizing until I found out that slum was a stew made of beef and potatoes and carrots and lots of onions. We ate some and it was very good, but perhaps it does pall a little after the third or fourth day. It forms the main staple of army diet in the trenches, for it is not possible to give the men in the line any great variety of food. The most

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tragic story in connection with food which we heard concerned a company which was just beginning dinner when a gas alarm was sounded. The men had been carefully trained to drop everything and adjust their masks when this alarm was sounded. So down went their mess tins, spilling slum on the trench floor as the masks were quickly fastened. Five minutes later word came that the gas alarm was a mistake.

Before we left we saw a patrol start out. The doughboys took to patrolling eagerly and officers who asked for volunteers were always swamped with requests from men who wanted to go. One lieutenant was surprised to have a large fat cook come to him to say that he would not be happy unless allowed to make a trip across No Man's Land to the German wire. When the officer asked him why he was so anxious to go, he said: "Well, you see, I promised to get a German helmet and an over-coat for a girl for Christmas and I haven't got much time left."

It was dark when we left the trenches and started cross country. The German guns had

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begun to fire a little. They were spasmodically shelling a clump of woods half a mile away and seemed indifferent to correspondents. But by this time the weather was actively hostile. The rain had changed to snow and the wind had risen to a gale. Every shell hole had become a trap to catch the unwary and wet him to the waist. Little brooks were carrying on like rivers and amateur lakes were everywhere. We walked and walked and suddenly the French lieutenant who was guiding us paused and explained that he hadn't the least idea where we were. Nothing could be seen through the driving snow and there was no certainty that we hadn't turned completely around. We wondered if there were any gaps in the wire and if it would be possible to walk into the German lines by mistake. We also wondered whether the Kaiser's three hundred marks for the first American would stand if the prisoner was only a reporter. Just then there was a sudden sharp rift in the mist ahead of us. A big flash cut through the snow and fog and after a second we heard a bang behind us.

“Those are American guns,” said our guide,

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and we made for them. We were lost again once or twice, but each time we just stood and waited for the flash from the battery until we reached our base. Shortly after we arrived the shelling ceased. There was hardly a war-like sound. It was a quiet night on a tranquil front. The weather was too bad even for fighting.

We went to the hospital in the little town and were allowed to look at the first German prisoner. He was a pretty sick boy when we saw him. He gave his age when examined as nineteen, but he looked younger and not very dangerous, for he was just coming out of the ether. The American doctors were giving him the best of care. He had a room to himself and his own nurse. The doughboys had captured him close to the American wire. There had been great rivalry as to which company would get the first prisoner, but he came almost unsought. The patrol was back to its own wire when the soldiers heard the noise of somebody moving about to the left. He was making no effort to walk quietly. As he came over a little hillock his outline could be seen for a second

and one of the Americans called out to him to halt. He turned and started to run, but a doughboy fired and hit him in the leg and another soldier's bullet came through his back. The patrol carried the prisoner to the trench. He seemed much more dazed by surprise than by the pain of his wounds. "You're not French," he said several times as the curious Americans gathered about him in a close, dim circle illuminated by pocket flash lamps. The prisoner next guessed that they were English and when the soldiers told him that they were Americans he said that he and his comrades did not know that Americans were in the line opposite them. Somebody gave him a cigarette and he grew more chipper in spite of his wounds. He began to talk, saying: "Ich bin ein esel."

There were several Americans who had enough German for that and they asked him why. The prisoner explained that he had been assigned to deliver letters to the soldiers. Some of the letters were for men in a distant trench which slanted toward the French line, and so to save time he had taken a short cut through

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No Man's Land. It was a dark night but he thought he knew the way. He kept bearing to the left. Now, he said, he knew he should have turned to the right. He said it would be a lesson to him. The next morning we heard that the German had died and would be buried with full military honors.

There was another patient whom we were interested in seeing. Lieutenant Devere H. Harden was the first American officer wounded in the war. His wound was not a very bad one and the doctors allowed us to crowd about his bed and ask questions. In spite of the British saying, "you never hear a shell that hits you," Harden said he both saw and heard his particular shell. He thought it would have scored a direct hit on his head if he had not fallen flat. As it was the projectile exploded almost fifty feet away from him and his wound was caused by a fragment which flew back and lodged behind his knee. He did not know that he had been hit, but sought shelter in a dug-out. Just as he got to the door he felt a pain in his knee and fell over. He noticed then that his leg was bleeding a little. A French of-

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ficer ran over to him and said: "You are a very lucky man."

"How is that?" asked Harden.

"Why, you're the first American to be wounded and I'm going to recommend to the general that he put up a tablet right here with your name on it and the date and 'first American to shed his blood for France.'"

The thought of the tablet didn't cheer the lieutenant up half so much as when we prevailed on the doctors to let him take some cigarettes from us and begin smoking again. By this time we had almost forgotten about the slum of earlier in the evening and so we stopped at the first *café* we came to on the road back to the correspondents' headquarters. Several American soldiers were sitting around a small stove in the kitchen, and although they said nothing, an old woman was cooking omelettes and small steaks and distributing them about to the rightful owners without the slightest mistake. At least there were no complaints. Perhaps the doughboys were afraid of the old woman for whenever one of them got in her way she would say nothing

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but push him violently in the chest with both hands. He would then step back and the cooking would go on.

Presently a noisy soldier came roaring into the kitchen. It took him just half a minute to get acquainted and about that much more time to tell us that he was driving a four mule team with rations. We asked him if he had gotten near the front and he snorted scornfully. He told us that the night before he had almost driven into the German lines. According to his story, he lost his way in the dark and drove past the third line trench, the second line and the first line and started rumbling along an old road which cut straight across No Man's Land and into the German lines.

"I was going along," he said, "and a doughboy out in a listening post, I guess it must have been, jumped up and waved both his hands at me to go back. 'What's the matter?' I asked him, just natural, like I'm talking to you, and he just mumbles at me. 'You're going right toward the German lines,' he says.

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‘For God’s sake turn round and go back and don’t speak above a whisper.’

“ ‘Whisper, Hell!’ I says to him, kind of mad, ‘I gotta turn four mules around.’ ”

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE VETERANS RETURN

WHEN the first contingent of doughboys came out of the trenches I went to a French officer whom I knew well and asked him what he thought of the Americans.

“Remember,” I told him, “I don’t want you to dress up an opinion for me. Tell me what you really thought of our men when you saw them up there. What did the French say about them?”

“Truly, I think they are very good,” the Frenchman told me. Then he corrected himself. “I mean I think they will be very good. They are something like the Canadians. They were pretty jumpy at first, but that doesn’t do any harm. The soldiers up there, they wanted to fire when the grass was moving and they did sometimes, without getting any orders. They got over that pretty soon. By the third night

they were pretty well settled. Of course, they can shoot better than our men and they are bigger and stronger, but in some things we have the advantage. You Americans are much more excitable than we French."

As a rule French and British officers were inclined to be optimistic about the Americans. They were impressed by their physique. The first of the Canadians were probably a little huskier than the Americans and the early contingents of Australians and New Zealanders were at least as good, but now all the rest are falling off in their physical standards on account of losses, while the most recent American arrivals in France are better than any of our earlier contingents.

The American is potentially a good soldier, but it is a long cry of preëminence. Any nation which establishes itself as the best in the field will have to perform marvelous deeds. The chances are that nobody will touch the high water mark of the French. After all, in her finest moments, France has a positive genius for warfare. Her best troops possess a combination of patience in defense and dash

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in attack. France has a fighting tradition which we do not possess. We must gain that before we can rival her.

From the point of view of the newspaperman the Frenchman is the ideal soldier of the world. Not only can he fight, but he can tell you about it. There is no trouble in getting a poilu to talk. He has opinions on every subject under the sun. The only difficulty is in understanding him once you have got him started. The doughboys, on the other hand, are usually reticent. They're always afraid of being detected in some sentimental or heroic pose and so they adopt a belittling attitude toward anything which happens as protection. The first men who came back from the trenches were not quite like that. These doughboys were more like Rossetti's angels. "The wonder was not yet quite gone from that still look" of theirs.

They did not minimize their experiences. I think I understand now what Secretary Baker meant when he said that some of the most thrilling stories of the war would come in letters from the soldiers. We went to the major

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of a battalion which had just come back from the front to its billets.

“No, nothing much happened while we were up there,” he said. “They didn’t shell us very hard; they didn’t try any raids or any gas and the aeroplanes let us alone.”

Then we tried the soldiers. “Yes, sir, we certainly did see some aeroplanes,” said a doughboy. “Why, one day there was two hundred and twenty-five flew over my head. I think the French brought down twenty of them, but I didn’t see that.” Another told how two hundred and fifty Germans had started to attack the Americans. “Our artillery put a barrage on them and in a couple of minutes all but three of them were dead.”

“Did you see those Germans yourself?” we asked him sternly.

“No,” he admitted, “it was a little bit down to our left but I heard about it.”

There were other stories which may have grown in the telling, but they sounded more plausible. One concerned a soldier who had his hyphen shot away at the front. This man was of German parentage and his father was

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in the German army. Before he went to the trenches he used to dwell on what a terrible thing it was for him to be fighting against his father and Fatherland. He declared that if it were possible he was going to play a passive part in the war. But in the course of time he went into the first line and no sooner was he in than he peeked over the top to have a look at the folks from the old home. "Pat, pat, pat!" a stream of bullets from a machine gun went by his head. The German-American gave a grunt of surprise and then a yell of rage and jumped over the parapet and began firing his rifle in the direction of the machine gun. He must have made a lucky hit for by some chance or other the machine gun ceased firing and the doughboy crawled back into the trench unharmed. He was still mad and kept mumbling, "I didn't do anything but look at 'em and they went and shot at me."

A story better authenticated concerns a visit which General Pershing paid to the trenches. A young captain took his responsibilities much to heart and wanted to leave nothing to his subordinates. He was on the

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rush constantly from one point to another and at the end of fifty-two hours of unceasing toil he went to his dugout to get three hours' sleep. He had hardly started to snore when there was a knock and a doughboy came in to complain that he had sore feet and what should he do. A few minutes later it was another who wanted to know where he could get additional candles. Rid of him, the captain really began to sleep, only to be awakened by a knock at the door and a voice, "Is this the company commander?"

"Yes," said the irritated captain, "and what the hell do you want?"

The door opened and the strictest disciplinarian in the American army permitted himself the shadow of a smile. "I'm General Pershing," he said.

One battalion came back from the front with an additional member. He was a large dog of uncertain breed who had deserted from the German lines. At least it was hard to say whether he belonged to the German army or the French. The French first saw him one afternoon when he came lumbering across No

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Man's Land and pushed himself through the wire in a place where it had grown a bit slack. One French soldier fired at him. The poilu thought it might be a new trick of the Germans. For all he knew a couple of Boches might have been concealed inside the big hound. He was no marksman, this soldier, for he missed the dog who promptly turned sharply to the left and came in at another point in the trenches. The soldiers made him welcome although there was some discussion as to what his nationality might be. It was evident that he had come across from the German lines, but it was possible that he was a French dog captured in one of the villages which fell to the invaders. The men in the front line tried him with all the German they knew—"You German pig," "what's your regiment?" "damn the Kaiser," "to Berlin," and a few others. He indicated no understanding of the phrases. Later he was taken further back and examined at length by an intelligence officer but no single German word could be found which he seemed to recognize. On the other hand it was ascertained that he

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was equally ignorant of French. However, he understood signs, would bark for a bone and never missed an invitation to eat.

During the first week of his stay the soldiers were generous in giving him a share of their rations. Later he became an old friend and did not fare so well. One night he disappeared and an outpost saw him lumbering back to the German lines. The Boches were out on patrol that night and apparently the big dog reached their lines without being fired upon. He was gone three weeks and then he returned for a long stay with the French. So it went on. He never affiliated himself permanently with either army and he never gave away secrets. Possibly his coming gave some sign of declining morale across the way for when the men became cross and testy the big dog simply changed sides. There was never any indication that he had been underfed even when rumors were strongest about the food shortage in Germany. The Boches took a pride in belying these stories, as best they could, by keeping the hound sleek and fat.

The French called him *Quatre Cent Vingt*

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after the big gun but nobody knew for certain his German alias. Once when he left the German lines in broad daylight the Boches all along the line were heard whistling for him to come back, but no one called him by name. The French chose to believe that across the way he was known as "Kamerad," but there was no evidence on this point. It is true that he would stand on his hind legs and wave his paws when anybody said "Kamerad," but this was a trick and took teaching.

He must have heard somehow or other about the coming of the Americans for he left the Germans at noon one day when the doughboys had hardly become settled in their new home. A French interpreter vouched for him and he was allowed free access to third line, second line, first line and, what he valued much more, to the company kitchen. Here for the first time he tasted slum. Soldiers are fond of belittling this combination of beef, onions, potatoes and carrots but Quatre Cent Vingt was frank in his admiration of the dish. Naturally, free-born American citizens could not be expected to know him by his outlandish

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French name or any abbreviation of it and he became Big Ed in honor of the mess sergeant. Hitherto Quatre Cent Vingt had been careful to show no favors. He had been the company's dog but he became so distinctly partial to the mess sergeant that the soldier took him over as his own and when the company went away Quatre Cent Vingt went too, following closely behind a rolling kitchen.

The experience in the trenches made American soldiers a little more expressive than they had been before but the national character remained baffling. As a nation we unquestionably have personality but our army is somewhat lacking in this quality even among its leaders. Pershing is a personality, of course, and Bullard and Sibert and March, but for the rest all major generals seemed much alike to us. Sibert we remembered because he was a quiet, kindly man who got the things he wanted without much fuss. He was among the thinkers of the army. Mostly he was listening to other people, but when he talked he wasted no words. Undoubtedly he was one of the best loved men in the army for he combined with

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his efficiency and his kindness an occasional playful flash of humor. I remember a visit which three American newspaperwomen paid to him one day at his headquarters. The conversation had scarcely begun when one of the women somewhat tactlessly remarked, "General, this is a young man's war, isn't it?"

General Sibert is husky enough but he is a bit gray and he smiled quizzically as he looked at his questioner over the top of a big pair of horn-rimmed glasses.

"When I was a cadet at West Point," said General Sibert, "I used to console myself with the thought that Napoleon was winning battles when he was thirty. Now, I find that my mind dwells more on the fact that Hindenburg is seventy."

Robert H. Bullard is probably the most picturesque figure in the American army. He has a reputation as a fighter and a daredevil and he is still one of the best polo players and broadsword experts in the American army. They say that when a second lieutenant swore at him one day in the heat of a game he made no complaint but laid for the young man later

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on and sent him sprawling off his horse in a wild scrimmage. He will fight broadsword duels with anybody regardless of rank if his opponent promises to be a man who can test his mettle. And yet it was a bit surprising that when the command of one of the crack divisions in France was open, General Pershing chose Bullard for the command because Major General Robert H. Bullard is perhaps the worst dressed major general in the American army. A poilu in one of the provincial cities mistook him for an American enlisted man and talked to him with great freedom for more than half an hour before an excited French officer rushed up and told him that the man with whom he was talking so familiarly was an American general.

“Oh, that’s all right,” said Bullard, “I wanted to hear what he had to say. Come around to my headquarters sometime and tell me some more.”

On another occasion I saw an American captain suffer acutely because Bullard appeared at a public Franco-American function with two days’ growth of beard. “What kind

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of an aide can he have," moaned the captain. "I was on his staff for two years and I never let him come out like that. I always had him fixed up when there was anything important on."

Tall, spare, hawk-featured and straight, Bullard represents a type of officer who has a large part to play in the American army. It is around such men that tradition grows and tradition is the marrow of an army. It was Bullard, too, who gave the best expression to the hope and purpose of the American army which I heard in France. He had said that what the American army must always maintain as its most important asset was the offensive spirit and when we asked him just what that was he lapsed into a story which was always his favorite device for exposition.

"There was once a Spanish farmer," said General Bullard, "who lived in a small house in the country with his pious wife. One day he came rushing out of the house with a valise in his hand and his good wife stopped him and asked, 'Where are you going?' 'I'm going to Seville,' said the farmer bustling right past

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her. ‘You mean God willing,’ suggested his pious wife. ‘No,’ replied the farmer, ‘I just mean that I’m going.’

“The Lord was angered by this impiety and He promptly changed the farmer into a frog. His wife could tell that it was her husband all right because he was bigger than any of the other frogs and more noisy. She went to the edge of the pond every day and prayed that her husband might be forgiven. And one morning—it was the first day of the second year—the big frog suddenly began to swell and get bigger and bigger until he wasn’t a frog any more, but a man. And he hopped out of the pond and stood on the bank beside his wife. Without stopping to kiss her or thank her or anything he ran straight into the house and came out with a valise in his hand.

“‘Where are you going?’ his wife asked in terror.

“‘To Seville,’ he said.

“She wrung her hands. ‘You mean God willing,’ she cried.

“‘No,’ thundered the farmer, ‘to Seville or back to the frog pond?’ ”

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In the main, however, American officers and soldiers were not very successful in expressing their feelings and ideals in regard to the war. One of the Y. M. C. A. huts carried on an anonymous symposium on the subject "Why I joined the army." Only a few of the answers came from the heart. Most of the rest were of two types. One sort was swanking and swaggering, in which the writer unconsciously melodramatized himself, and the other was cynical, in which the writer betrayed the fact that he was afraid of being melodramatic. Thus there was one man who answered, "To fight for my country, the good old United States, the land of the free and the starry flag that I love so well." "Because I was crazy," wrote another and it is probable that neither reason really represented the exact feeling of the man in question.

Some were distinctly utilitarian such as that of the soldier who wrote "To improve my mind by visiting the famous churches and art galleries of the old world." There was also a simplicity and directness in "to put Malden on the map." But the two which seemed to

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be the truest of all were, "Because they said I wasn't game and I am too" and "Because she'll be sorry when she sees my name in the list of the fellows that got killed."

For a time I was all muddled up about the American reaction to the war. Sometimes we seemed helplessly provincial and then along would come some glorious unhelpless assertiveness. This would probably be in something to do with plumbing or doctoring. Even our friends in Europe are inclined to put us down as materialists. They think we love money more than anything else in the world. I don't believe this is true. I think we use money only as a symbol and that even if we don't express them, or if we express them badly, the American who fights has not forgotten to pack his ideals. A young American officer brought that home to me one day in Paris. He was a doctor from a thriving factory town upstate.

"You know," he began, "this war is costing me thousands of dollars. I was getting along great back home. A lot of factories had me for their doctor. My practice was worth \$15,000 a year. It was all paid up, too, you

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know, workman's compensation stuff. I'll bet it won't be worth a nickel when I get back."

He sat and drummed on the table and looked out on the street and a couple of Portuguese went by in their slate gray uniforms and then some Russians, with their marvelous tunics, which Bakst might have designed; there were French aviators in black and red, and rollicking Australians, an Italian, looking glum, and a Roumanian with a girl on his arm.

"Did you ever read 'Ivanhoe'?" said the man with the \$15,000 practice, fiercely and suddenly.

I nodded.

"Well," he said, "when I was a boy I read that book five times. I thought it was the greatest book in the world, and I guess it is, and all this reminds me of 'Ivanhoe.'"

"Of 'Ivanhoe'?" I said.

"Yes, you know, all this," and he made an expansive gesture, "Verdun, and Joffre, and 'they shall not pass,' and Napoleon's tomb, and war bread, and all the men with medals

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and everything. Great stuff! There'll never be anything like it in the world again. I tell you it's better than 'Ivanhoe.' Everything's happening and I'm in it. I'm in a little of it, anyway. And if I have a chance to get in something big I don't care what happens. No, sir, if I could just help to give the old Boche a good wallop I wouldn't care if I never got back. Why, I wouldn't miss this for——" His eyes were sparkling with excitement now and he was straining for adequate expression. He brought his fist down on the table until the glasses rattled. "I wouldn't miss this for \$50,000 cash," he said.

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